

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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WORKSHOPTALKS

Acting human not cost-effective

by Htun Lin

Vanessa O'Connell reported in the *Wall Street Journal* ("Stores Count Seconds to Trim Labor Costs," Nov. 13, 2008) that "Taylorism," used by capitalists in manufacturing to speed up production by breaking down each one's work into mindless repeatable tasks, is now big in service industry jobs, especially chain stores. Ironically, the story focused on stores in Detroit, home of the U.S. auto industry that is now threatened with bankruptcy.

Henry Ford's assembly line was the epitome of Taylorism early in the twentieth century. Stores are now conducting Taylor's time-and-motion studies, using computer software for surveillance on their employees. The effort is to shave every last second from retail labor to squeeze out every last penny of profit. Those who do not perform within the guidelines are given "alternatives," demotion or even termination.

While workers feel like it is their duty to be customer-service minded, the new down-to-the-second time-study intimidation has left many of us with no choice but to be anti-social. Retail workers who used to enjoy taking extra time to help elderly customers now see them as customers from hell, taking too long and negatively impacting a worker's time-study stats.

We have the same problem at the HMO where I work. It is standard practice to redline health-insurance customers, rejecting those who already have an illness

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BLACK/REDVIEW

Obama and the future

Mel Vapour, of the East Bay Media Center, interviewed Black/Red View columnist John Alan on Nov. 17, 2008. A video of the interview will be available at the EBMC's website, <http://www.eastbaymediacenter.com>—Editors.

Mel: We're here to talk with John Alan, African-American filmmaker and writer, commentator for News & Letters for the past 35-40 years. We're here with the person who broke the color barrier back in the 1950s and 1960s with *KQED*, the first Black broadcast journalist in the state of California, to ask his thoughts on the mandate of the people of the U.S. to elect Barack Obama, America's first African-American president.

Alan: I think it is high time that America did get an African-American president. But can this Black president be more than all the presidents? The prime duty of a U.S. president is to protect and preserve U.S. capitalism. No president has gone beyond that. I don't know whether President Obama can go beyond that and become a totally different type of president. Not just because he is the first Black president, but because he is the first president to face all the problems now facing U.S. capitalism: the inequalities that exist, the racism that exists, and all the things we have suffered through over centuries of presidents. We have gone through some bad wars during the period of non-Black presidents. We have to wait and look very closely to find out whether this will be a revolutionary change in what a U.S. president is.

Mel: Obama is being likened to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, whose era you lived through in the 1930s. What are your thoughts on comparisons between

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Israel's war on Gaza shows need for a total uprooting

by Gerry Emmett

The tentative "cease-fire," already interrupted by grenade, mortar and missile strikes, between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, of Jan. 18 following 22 days of war, was ushered in with a scene of pure modern horror.

Palestinian doctor Izz el-Deen Aboul Aish, who works at an Israeli hospital and has reported on Gaza for Israeli television, announced live on the air that his home had just been bombed by Israeli warplanes. Three of his daughters were killed, and two seriously injured. Dr. Aboul Aish said truthfully, "All that was ever fired out of our house was love, hugs and acts of peace, nothing else, ever."

Shocked viewers caught an unexpected look at the barbarity of the Gaza war as the Israeli news anchor broke down into tears along with the Palestinian doctor. A Gazan described the experience of life under attack this way: "In my home we can't get basic needs. There is no safe place we can go. We cannot communicate with our relatives or friends—networks are down as missiles rain on our homes, mosques, and even hospitals..."

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

As Palestinians began to dig out thousands of destroyed buildings, the horrific toll of innocent life from weeks of air and ground war became even clearer. As of this writing, of 1,259 Palestinians dead, well over half are civilians. Many are children. An estimated 4,100 homes were destroyed, along with 1,500 factories and workshops.

There were also attacks upon buildings housing emergency humanitarian aid, like the UN Relief and Works Agency. "International law unequivocally forbids attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance mission," said UNRWA spokesman Malcolm Smart. "Deliberate attacks on humanitarian assistance facilities or personnel may constitute a war crime."

All this could hardly have been otherwise, fighting in crowded Gaza. It could not have been otherwise



One of the many world-wide demonstrations against Israel's war on Gaza

considering the cynical effort by Israel's government to use its battle with Hamas to make some statements.

One statement was directed to Israeli voters by the current ruling Labor-Kadima coalition. Israeli peace protestors were quick to point out the timing of

the war in relation to the February national elections, naming it the "6-Seat War," the number of Knesset seats that the Labor Party expects to pick up. It likely won't have stopped the right-wing Netanyahu of Likud from being elected Prime Minister.

The other statement was directed to Iran, the biggest regional supporter of Hamas. It was meant to say that Israel had "learned the lessons" of its destructive war

in Lebanon in 2006, which was claimed as a "victory" by Iran's Lebanese client Hezbollah—if hardly by the suffering people of southern Lebanon or Beirut. Thus even greater destruction was visited upon Gaza.

What the Israeli government hasn't learned, though, is the futility of its attempts to control the Palestinians, or to crush their desire for self-determination. In this, Israel shows itself as one more state-capitalist power wedded to its ignoble imperial ambitions.

The U. S. government has shown nothing but complicity in this regard. This is true of both the outgoing Bush regime and the incoming Obama administration, with his appointment of Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State. Certainly Israel wouldn't have proceeded without an understanding with the U.S. The careful timing of the war around the U.S. election shows this, with one Israeli government figure claiming that the cease-fire was implemented to avoid embarrassing Barack Obama in his first days in office. Future U.S. policy is unclear—though Obama's first phone call to a foreign leader went to Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority.

Now, despite the cease-fire, thousands of Israeli troops remain poised to re-enter Gaza, and Hamas retains the ability to launch rocket strikes into Israel

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EDITORIAL

State of world in crisis

eight million were settling for part-time work. And if you included another 1.9 million who had given up looking, you confronted an actual figure of 14.5%.

Yet a week after inauguration, companies announced a shocking 55,000 more jobs gone in a single day—20,000 cut at Caterpillar, 8,000 at Sprint Nextel, 7,000 at Home Depot, and 18,000 if Pfizer completes its purchase of Wyeth. Only a few days later another 20,000 were gone at Caterpillar. And none believed this would be the end of the acceleration.

TODAY'S MYRIAD CRISES

The myriad nature of today's global crises was reflected in what Obama chose to address the very first day after his swearing in—from freezing Bush's executive orders on the environment and labor relations, to meeting with military leaders to discuss the speed of withdrawal from Iraq. Perhaps considered the most newsworthy was the notice he finally paid to the horrendous war Israel had been waging with tremendous human destruction in Gaza. His calling of four Middle Eastern leaders was immediately critiqued for its disregard of the nearly universal condemnation of the Israeli government's attacks on the people of Gaza, attacks so brutal that they could be called crimes against humanity. (See Lead, this page.) It is not only the "State of the Nation," but of the world that is in need of emergency care.

What becomes clear is that the crises are so deep

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Leading drive for peace in Middle East

by Terry Moon

Women—Palestinian and Jewish—have always been in the forefront of the peace movement in Israel/Palestine. They were the first to do one amazing thing: work together in the same organizations for peace.

WOMAN
AS
REASON

Their demands often transcend a call for peace and put forward ideas for Palestinians and Jews to live together; for women to be involved in leadership in all areas, not only creating peace and reconciliation; and for recognizing, and then working to end, the militarization of Israeli society, no matter how unpopular a stance it may be.

In the recent brutal war that Israel waged against the people of Gaza (see Lead p. 1)—for it was a war against the civilians of Gaza, not alone Hamas soldiers—women's groups were the first to call for demonstrations. On Dec. 27, the Coalition of Women for Peace, a group of seven different women's organizations, in four hours mobilized 1,500 people to march through Tel Aviv, stopping to chant at the Ministry of Defense where the outgoing Israeli Prime Minister, who is also the Defense Minister, was giving a press conference justifying the war. The women wrote: "Our voices were heard loud and clear by the government, the public and the Israeli media."

By Jan. 3, 10,000 marched against the war, including over 1,000 Arabs. The chants put succinctly a commitment to the kind of peace that means a completely different society than exists now in the region: "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies"; "Stop the Killing! No to the siege"; "In Gaza and Sderot, kids want to live"; "Yes to life for both peoples!"; "The war belongs to Olmert—The victims belong to us!" The march was so large it surprised the organizers, who had mobilized only 1,000 demonstrators against the 2006 Israeli attack on Lebanon.

'WE REFUSE TO BE ENEMIES'

And while Arabs came to demonstrations organized by predominantly Jewish groups, Jews also joined those demonstrations called by Arabs. Thus only a few days later, Jewish protesters, including those from the Women's Coalition for Peace, joined with hundreds of Arab Israeli citizens where one of the most popular posters showed the Israel and Palestine flags next to each other; another was "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies." The difference in the size of the demonstrations as well as the speed of their mobilizations reveals that 2009 is not 2006, and that more of the Israeli population is refusing to believe the lie that the government told again and again: that this was a "war of no choice"; "no choice" but to bomb Gaza into oblivion and willfully kill over 1,000 civilians.

Even a woman from Sderot, one of the towns most frequently hit by Hamas missiles, insisted on making her voice heard by writing on the internet. In answer to

Stop prison sex assaults

Detroit—The first two trials in a class-action lawsuit filed in 1996 against the Michigan Dept. of Corrections yielded verdicts awarding the first 18 women—out of over 500—an estimated \$50 million. None have been paid as the state appeals the verdict. Prisons and correctional facilities all over the state are accused of failing to prevent sexual assaults by male guards on women prisoners. These assaults routinely included rapes, molestation during pat-downs, and forced sex.

The Michigan Women's Commission (a state agency) in 1993, the U.S. Dept. of Justice in 1995, and Human Rights Watch in 1996 all released reports of the "highly sexualized and excessively hostile" environment in Michigan's prisons. The state made changes such as requiring women correctional officers, rather than men, to pat down women prisoners, removal of male guards from women's housing units, and a requirement to report allegations of sexual abuse to the Michigan State Police as well as the Corrections Dept. Internal Affairs unit.

One of the plaintiffs, Toni Bunton, told the *Detroit Free Press* (1/4/09): "I want people to know this is going on in your backyard, and you might not care because it might not affect you, but you should care. This is about civil rights, basic fundamental rights of human beings."

Why did it take 12 years for the case to come to trial? And who is protesting sexual abuse in male prisons? Deborah LaBelle, the Michigan attorney who filed the lawsuit said, "No one, no one in this country, no one in a civilized society is sentenced to be raped and assaulted in prison." We can only hope that any victories won by women will be extended to men prisoners too.

—Susan Van Gelder

Labor Minister Benjamin Ben Eliezer, known as Fuad, who said, "The heavier the blow we deliver, the more our hearts widen," this woman of Sderot, Nomika Zion, said: "Hey Fuad, not everyone. Even if I was the only one around Sderot feeling differently—and I am not—my voice should be heard. Not in my name and not for me you went to war. The current bloodbath in Gaza is not in my name and not for my security. Destroyed homes, bombed schools, thousands of new refugees—are not in my name and not for my security."

THE OTHER ISRAEL

The statement of Isha L'Isha, a grassroots feminist organization fighting for women's rights in Israel, puts it plainly. This war is against our sisters: "The attacks of the air force are perpetrated against high-density population, including our sisters, the women and daughters of Gaza, who are imprisoned without an option to flee..." They make explicit the profound changes that war brings to society: "Deepening of violence acts to undermine the very basis of democracy as it throws society to the management of military persons. It acts to deepen societal gaps as economic life in the periphery is brought to a halt. Moreover, it causes devastating damage to the freedom struggle of women in Gaza, in Israel

and everywhere violence claims governance."

We write often of the women's peace movement in Israel/Palestine because so few know that there is a second Israel, one that opposes its government,

that is fighting to change society. Israeli papers and TV news refuse to report on the carnage in Gaza—for example one two-hour weekend state TV news program showed not one picture from Gaza—and too often papers in the U.S. follow suit. But delving into the specifics about the Israeli/Palestinian women's peace movement is important for all of us—not only to understand that there are two worlds in every country, the rulers and the ruled who fight against them—but because it is in the struggle to end war and to create something new that the beginnings of a new, human, society can be found.

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

As U.S. women, for the first time in eight years, may have barriers to reproductive justice lifted with the arrival of the Obama administration, young women are raising their voices to fight for women's reproductive rights around the world. The National Young Women's Leadership Conference, set for March 21-23 in Washington, D.C., will discuss international family planning, the struggle for reproductive justice, and what students can do to provide accessible and adequate healthcare for women and girls. Contact www.feministcampus.org/know/global.

* * *

International Human Rights Day (Dec. 10) saw the launch of the One Law for All campaign against Sharia Law in Britain. With widespread international support, the campaign calls on the government to recognize that Sharia and all religious laws: discriminate against women and children in particular, work against equality and human rights, should be banned from operating within and outside of the legal system. They plan a demonstration and march, March 7, commemorating International Women's Day. It will end with a public meeting titled "Sharia Law, Sexual Apartheid and Women's Rights." For information contact www.onelawforall.org.uk.

—Information from Maryam Namazie

* * *

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is challenging U.S. policy limiting teenage refugees' access to reproductive care. The Administration for Children and Family initiated a policy limiting reproductive health services for undocumented teenagers, including access to contraception and abortion. The ACLU stated the U.S. cannot deny, by law, reproductive healthcare to these teens, and should do everything to ensure their well-being when they have nowhere else to turn.

* * *

The Mexican Supreme Court delivered an emphatic decision upholding the law protecting the right of all women to choose safe, legal, first-trimester abortion. Many doctors in public hospitals refused to perform abortions for any reason after it was legalized in 2007.

Sex workers network

The International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers was started in 2003 by the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP-USA), a national network of sex workers and their allies. It was started in response to the murders of over 60 prostitutes in 21 days committed by Gary Leon Ridgeway, the "Green River Killer." Ridgeway, convicted of 48 of the murders, stated, "I thought I could get away with killing hookers because nobody cares about them. I was doing the cops a favor by cleaning the trash up off the street."

This year, in Washington, D.C., the march started with a rally in Franklin Square Park and ended with a vigil at the Justice Department, where the names were read of sex workers who had been murdered and assaulted worldwide that year. They included Deborah Jeane Palfrey, the "D.C. Madam," and Brandy Britton. They both committed suicide under suspicious circumstances.

MARCHERS CHANTED "Sex Workers' Rights are Human Rights" and carried signs saying "End Violence Against Women, Decriminalize Prostitutes!" "Outlaw Poverty, Not Prostitutes!" "Stop Shaming Us To Death!" and "Nothing About Us Without Us!" Speakers discussed the attitude of society and police that sex workers are expendable, not even human. This attitude is reinforced by sexual shame, which, along with the illegal status of prostitution, keeps sex workers and their allies from speaking out against violence and reporting assaults and rapes, which are sometimes committed by the police.

Speakers made the point that this march was one step towards dispelling that shame. They made the connection between violence against sex workers and violence against all women, LGBT people, and people of color, also stating that attackers especially target sex workers who are Transgender and people of color. Speakers stated that sex work is usually done for the purpose of survival and that Transgender people sometimes resort to it because they face massive discrimination in employment and educational opportunities.

SWOP SENT A LETTER to President-elect Obama and select cabinet appointees demanding policy changes including decriminalization and the classification of violence against sex workers as a hate crime. The letter states that listening to sex workers is important because they are at the forefront of the struggle against human trafficking and have been recognized by the Commission on AIDS in Asia as being important in the fight against the disease.

Ban Ki-Moon, the UN Secretary General, has called for an end to discrimination against sex workers, stating that this would give them access to resources to help prevent the spread of AIDS. Their letter also calls for a repeal of the Anti-Prostitution Pledge in PEPFAR (President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) that forbids funding to any international organization that does not condemn prostitution.

The International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers was observed by other groups in the U.S. and worldwide. It is a time to force the public to acknowledge as a tragedy the violence it would rather ignore or trivialize. It is also a time to affirm that the solutions to the problems surrounding sex work can only come from the sex workers themselves.

—Adele

Pro-choice rally



Urszula Wislanka/News & Letters

San Francisco—On the 36th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* the Right organized a so-called "walk for life" here among other cities. As in every year, there was a spirited counter-demonstration. Perhaps because many feel we "won" with Obama's election—after all, just the day before he struck down Bush's "global gag-rule" forbidding international family health providers to even mention abortion as a choice—there were not the usual thousands, but hundreds of young and old, women and men. One participant, referring to the "lifers" gathering on a nearby field, said, "We are now next to occupied territory. One day a year for the past five years thousands are bused into San Francisco to tell us that we are wrong. And we can say it is not working."

What was pronounced in this year's event was the attempt to not separate a woman's right to choose from all the other challenges facing the world. Thus one speaker called explicitly to "unite across false lines of single-issue." Francis, a young organizer for justice for Oscar Grant (see article p. 8) stated that Oscar Grant's killing is a part of a larger problem.

—Urszula Wislanka

Labor targeted as UFCW wins in N.C.

Detroit—A national propaganda campaign is underway by the Republican Party and business interests to defeat the proposed Employee Free Choice Act. This would give employees the right to union recognition if a majority of workers at a workplace signed a card indicating they wanted to join a union. Called card check, this could eliminate roadblocks to the unionization of employees.

This legislation, supported by President Obama and his Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, is a key demand of organized labor, which had thrown its support to Obama's presidential campaign. While many expect the legislation to be passed, it is anything but a done deal.

WAR CHEST TO DESTROY LABOR

The forces opposed are formidable and well-financed, including the Center for Union Facts, and other groups with misleading names like the Workforce Fairness Institute and the Coalition for a Democratic Workplace, which is a federation of 500 business groups. They have millions of dollars at their disposal and have launched media attack ads aimed at Congress, other businesses and the public to block the legislation.

They hope to maintain present employee-employer relationships that allow employers to require elections for union recognition. While this sounds reasonable, in practice it is heavily skewed in favor of management.

WORKSHOPTALKS

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or a family history of illness. Since elderly patients take more care than the average patient, and make us look bad on the boss's time-study ledger, many of us shave time off our ledgers either by avoiding being assigned to very old and very sick patients, or by putting pressure on them to hurry—or sometimes even commit fraud.

Some Certified Nurses' Aides feel forced to doctor their patient-care documents—making up vital statistics without having seen the patient. They enlist the RN supervisor to get permission to tie up demented patients just to cut the time it takes to deal with them. There are really ugly fights with co-workers about who is going to take the next older and sicker patient.

Falsifying forms is done, I feel, with a nod and a wink from management. I've reported some of these falsifications. My bosses didn't do anything. I think they figure if it helps their bottom line and keeps their departmental budget in line, then why not turn a gaze away from employees doing these fraudulent things.

HEALTHCARE ON PAPER

People are judged by what is on the ledger, not by what actually gets done. As long as no one is caught, the boss will be promoted because they are under budget. That a few patients might be harmed here and there does not come into the calculations until they get caught. Then they put on a big show for the state authorities.

That's what happened a month ago when the California State Dept. of Health and Medicare regulators did a surprise inspection, on a tip from an anonymous caller, probably a worker or a patient. The surprise inspection uncovered a myriad of violations on the part of management. Violations included delays in patient care and poor documentation. Medicare regulators had threatened to pull federal funding.

Now top administrators are scrambling for cover. They called all managers and supervisors to a mandatory emergency meeting to try to get everyone "within federal guidelines," and to abide by state regulations. All managers are lecturing their workers daily on the top priority of preserving Medicare funding.

HMO GOAL: HEALTH OF BOTTOM LINE

Some of us noticed how they forgot to add that the point of any remedy ought to be to improve patient care, not just to preserve funding. Other workers dismissed the whole charade as a dog and pony show, knowing that a few heads might roll, but every incentive in our alienating workplace is to let things slip again once the inspectors leave.

Denying healthcare is no longer restricted to insurance adjusters. It is the way healthcare is practiced on those who have insurance. It is capitalism, and its drive to self-expand, that forces everyone who works under it to behave according to the dictates of its anti-human values.

HMO practice, based on the objectivity of labor time under capitalism, separates us healthcare workers from our patients and fellow workers. Rather than regulations, we need a new concept of labor that will confront this false objectivity head-on.



Boycott Smithfield march before the UFCW was voted in

Word and World

refuse to recognize it and delay union representation for years through legal maneuvers. These practices were often ignored by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), staffed by corporate-friendly administrators in the Bush Administration. The NLRB, an agency designed to support unionization, became a powerful arm to attack and defeat the formation of unions.

A case in point is the history of the largest hog slaughterhouse in the nation, the Smithfield plant in Tar Heel, N.C., with about 5,000 workers. For 16 years efforts have been underway by the United Food and Commercial Workers union to gain recognition, including two elections that failed in 1994 and 1997. The company's violations of labor election laws were so blatant, including spying on and firing workers and beating union sympathizers on election day, that the NLRB was forced to bring charges against Smithfield.

It was not until 2006 that an appeals court upheld the charges and fined Smithfield \$1.5 million for its violations. The union recognition election, however, was not held until last December. Its success marked a milestone in labor organization in the notoriously anti-union South and will inspire further union organizing efforts in Southern states.

This success might not have been possible without heavy constraints imposed on the company because of past violations. Union organizers were free to talk to workers in the plant and a monitor could check every piece of campaign literature to guard against false claims. A coalition of the union, Jobs for Justice, and community groups launched a campaign that included boycotts of Smithfield products, demonstrations at shareholders' meetings and daily leafleting at the plant.

WORKERS GAIN CONFIDENCE

Many Latino workers were no longer in the plant. They had undoubtedly been intimidated by company threats to expose those illegally in the U.S.—especially if they supported the union—or had left in fear because of increasing immigrant raids by the government. Obama's win in North Carolina gave the workers, two-thirds of whom are Black, the conviction that they could change their exploitative conditions at Smithfield.

Card check organizing did not play a role in the Smithfield union victory. Data from the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan and Quebec, where they do have card check approval, indicates that the success rate is limited, since employers there have learned union-blocking tactics from U.S. employers who have permitted card check organizing.

The limited experience in the U.S. discloses that the union organizing success rate with card check is 70%, compared with 55-60% with NLRB elections. If the card check legislation is approved by Congress, corporate lawyers will be working overtime to find loopholes to block or delay unionization of workers.

—Andy Phillips

Some workers less equal than others

Detroit—Workplace issues, injuries, detentions, police brutality, you name it. Immigrants are catching hell. I am a lifelong Detroit resident, descended from auto-workers since our arrival in this Promised Land. I am 51 years old and have been active in labor and community grassroots issues from childhood to the present. My father is a retiree from Chrysler as was my grandfather, who came here in 1919. My family is hard-core working class and I am the single mother of four daughters. Together with a group of wonderful comrades, we formed the Centro Obrero after the big Immigrant Rights marches in March of 2006.

A few months back, a fight between neighbors broke out, which is not unusual in Southwest Detroit. A friend explained that she is the owner of a duplex, one part of which five young men rent. Three brothers and two cousins live quietly, only going to work and back. The next-door neighbors got into a conflict with these young men while they were sitting on the porch. They began to brawl in the street, a bottle was thrown, and the police were called. The police brought no interpreter and only listened to the white people tell what happened. The police arrested only the Mexicans and took three to jail.

When my friend insisted on interpreting, they threatened to arrest her. The young Mexican men are

Corporations can prevent union representatives from being at the workplace to talk to workers, can harass, intimidate or fire union sympathizers (some have even been murdered), can hold compulsory employee meetings where unions are falsely attacked, and can threaten to close the plant if a union is approved.

If workers do vote in a union, companies can

Student jobs at stake at Univ. of Illinois

Champaign, Ill.—As graduate student employees at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign plan for bargaining this spring, the university administration is clearly taking advantage of the recession and its own "fiscal crisis" in order to create a climate of fear and uncertainty on campus. A hiring freeze has already been instituted, and several mass emails have been sent out to students and faculty warning of hard times to come.

THE LATEST ATTEMPT to scaremonger while feigning transparency came last week when Chancellor Richard Hermann held a town hall meeting to discuss the potentially drastic measures the university may have to take. He started his presentation by showing a map of the U.S. with 44 states in red to represent the state universities that are currently making cuts.

He and his hand-picked panelists spent the next 45 minutes discussing the situation in vague terms: "Core programs must be protected." "Layoffs and furloughs may be necessary." "At this stage we don't know what will happen." This was followed by questions from those in attendance, many of them union members and leaders from AFSCME representing the campus clerical workers, the Association of Academic Professionals and the Graduate Employees Organization (GEO).

The administration was forced to answer hard questions: "Are you considering pay freezes for those in the administration making the most?" "Would you be willing to commit to protecting the jobs of those lowest-paid workers on campus?" The answers to these questions involved a lot of sidestepping and avoidance of specifics.

As part of its plan for generating income, the university presented a proposal in January for reducing appointments that generate tuition waivers for some graduate students. This means that those students who are only able to attend the university because their teaching appointment waives their tuition will now be forced out.

The plan would eliminate positions in departments that only offer terminal masters degrees, not doctorates, as well as positions in any department for teaching assistants assigned 10 hours or less of work. At present that will affect roughly a quarter of GEO members, but all members are concerned.

If the administration is allowed to do this, then it could certainly spread to those with larger appointments as well as encourage departments to change the way they offer assistantships. All positions could be reduced to ten hours if it proves to be income-generating for departments.

IN LIGHT OF UPCOMING bargaining, the GEO is in a tough spot. Many ask what good will it do to ask for a measly \$2,000 raise if the university can yank our tuition waivers—that would force us to pay \$15,000 in tuition when we only make \$13,000 through our stipend. But is it possible to protect tuition waivers through the bargaining table? The university has always preserved its power to dictate the terms of defining appointments. Incorporating language into the contract that protects the definition of tuition waiver generating appointments will be unprecedented.

But GEO members are in it for the long haul. In its first general membership meeting of the semester, GEO members reviewed a draft of our proposed bargaining platform. It includes asking for a living wage, improving healthcare, and insuring equality for all graduate student employees. Given the current climate and the stance the university has taken, it is clear that we are in for a tough fight.

—Grad Student Union member

being charged with assault with intent to commit murder—there are no injured parties. They remain in jail. I will go to the Mexican Consul in Detroit and ask him to help them get immediately deported to Mexico instead of waiting to go to a hearing or remain in a justice system where they have no rights and could easily go to prison.

It is strange to hope for deportation, but we find ourselves in that position more and more these days. One of the people detained by immigration after being injured at work (and because he was injured at work) ended up getting his arm amputated because he never received treatment.

We are going to meet with the mayor, Ken Cockrel, and confront the administration over the violations of human rights going on in our city, particularly with regard to the No Profiling and Sanctuary City ordinances. If we don't make this the Promised Land, no one else will, either. These are the hardest times I have ever seen.

Now that we have national and international contacts, we can communicate better and find missing persons. I am hoping Centro Obrero gets a website for this purpose. People can let us know where they end up, what the journey was like, and how their loved ones can find them.

—Elena M. Herrada

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: To mark 50 years since the Cuban revolution, we print Raya Dunayevskaya's Two Worlds column from the December 1960 issue of News & Letters, originally titled, "The Cuban Revolution: The Year After."

In a few weeks the Cuban Revolution will mark [the second anniversary of] its victory. It is no accident that its enthusiastic and uncritical alliance with the Russian orbit of power is almost as old. Contrary to the claims of the old radicals, who can no longer remember what constitutes principled working-class politics, this was not the only path open to it when it shook off the American imperialist yoke. The revolutions that preceded it—in the Middle East and in Africa—took advantage of the global division into two nuclearly-armed blocs fighting for world power, to play off one against the other to their own national advantage. If Cuba chose to disregard this precedent and align itself with but one of these power blocs, the answer cannot lie outside of itself.

FIDELISMO

Forget Russia for a moment—it was nowhere around when Fidel Castro marched into Havana at the head of the July 26th guerilla movement. Neither it nor the native Cuban Communists supported that movement during the seven years it hid out in the Sierra Maestra Mountains. The revolutionary petty-bourgeois lawyer who led this movement had been so little concerned with Communist theory that he gained financial help from many a Cuban, and even some American, liberal bourgeois who had had their fill of the corrupt Batista.

The guerilla fighters from the mountains, the peasants in the Oriente province, the proletariat and students of Havana merged to bring the greatest revolution Latin America had ever witnessed. There is no doubt that with the overthrow of the bloody Batista dictatorship, the revolution broke decisively with U. S. imperialism, which had plundered the Cuban economy. In expropriating the American capitalistic owners, it achieved an agricultural revolution and put an end to the feudal relations between the Cuban peasants and the Cuban-American plantation owners. At the same time, however, the power lay not in peasant committees, but in the state who was the new owner.

STATE-ISM

As for Castro's attitude to the industrial workers, from the very start his bossist, administrative mentality stuck out from the day of victorious entry into Havana when he demanded that the revolutionary students and workers there put down their arms. He proclaimed his movement alone to be the government, his army alone the army. Nevertheless, the overwhelming enthusiasm for the revolution made the proletariat, despite its reservations, lay down its arms, and willingly tighten its belt even as the unemployed continued to be silent. When it did, in due course, at the first trade union congress, question some economic policies of the

On the 50th anniversary of Batista's overthrow

Fidelismo, statism, and the tragedy of the Cuban Revolution

new government, Castro ran out of the convention, calling it a "madhouse."

It is at this point that a kinship was established between the new regime and the native Communists, for it is they who used their leadership of the trade unions to transform them into a pliant tool of the new armed state. **Together with world Communism Fidel Castro shared the conception of the "backwardness of the masses" who had to be led. The state would henceforward give the orders, the workers and peasants would continue to work harder while the leaders continued to lead and set foreign policy.**

Just as the peasant found that, in tilling the soil, he was responsible, not to a committee elected by himself and subject to his recall, but to the state, so the worker found that he too had no organization responsible to him. Despite the lower rents, there has been no change, except for the worse, in the workers' conditions of life and labor. Unemployment continues as do poor wages. Worst of all, there are no Workers' Councils or any other form of free expression, whether in their own organization or in the press. Those who had hailed the revolution had by now as little freedom to criticize any action of the government, least of all its total embrace of all things Russian, Chinese, East European, including the bloody regime of Kadar's Hungary.

The stream of refugees are by no means restricted to "Batista's supporters" or "agents of American imperialism." Everyone from the editor of *Bohemia* to militant trade unionists have attempted to escape, and if the price isn't always the firing squad, it is always silence. When only a Castro—Fidel or Raul—or a Che Guevara have endless voice here and abroad while the masses are made voiceless; when all spontaneity becomes hypostatized into state grooves; when relations with the outside world are not as people-to-people but through army-state powers; and when all this occurs in a world divided into two nuclearly-armed powers which threaten humanity's very existence—isn't it time for a new realistic balance sheet to be drawn up? Least helpful in this regard are the old radicals.

OLD RADICALS

Trotskyists, who have spent years in exposing Russia as "a degenerated workers' state" headed by a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy, now feel that it is

necessary to whitewash that regime "in order to fight the main enemy, Yankee imperialism." Even some radicals who have spent many years exposing Russian Communism as just another form of state capitalism feel that it is their "revolutionary duty" to spend all their time attacking American imperialism, and none exposing the other pole of world imperialism—Russian totalitarianism.

What is it that impels such self-imposed blindness to the tragedy of the Cuban Revolution which still has



Cuban revolutionaries on horseback

a chance to compel its leaders to follow an independent road? Why should the workers and peasants in Cuba be allowed to think that in the Chinese "commune" the Chinese peasants are any less oppressed than the Cubans were by the American

plantation owners? Why should the Cuban workers be kept in ignorance of conditions of labor in totalitarian state capitalistic Russia? Why should the Cuban people know that the Guantanamo base is a threat to their existence and not know that the Russian tanks rolled over the Hungarian Freedom Fighters? Why should they only know of the discrimination against the Negroes in the South but not know of the extermination of nationalities opposed to Stalinism in Russia?

SOME POSSIBLE DOUBLE-CROSSES

Why should literacy be equated to illiteracy of the realities of a world divided into two, and only two, nuclearly-armed powers out for conquest of the world? Why not allow your new hero, Castro, to know some things about Russia—its cynicism in foreign policy—which might easily result in its dropping of Cuba the minute it could get a "peaceful co-existence alliance" with America? Why, for that matter, not make yourself aware that this petty bourgeois lawyer is just as cynical and could as easily slide into alliance with the American State Department if he came to face the only truly independent third force—the masses wishing to mold their own destiny in their own hands sans Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and the newly-arisen state bureaucracy?

There is one reason, and one reason only, behind all this self-imposed blindness to the realities of our state capitalist world. One and all are Planners who fear the spontaneity of the revolutionary masses more than anything else on earth, including state capitalism.

Fidelistas, like Communists, Trotskyists like other radicals who thirst for power, share the capitalistic mentality of the "backwardness of the masses." All are ready "to lead," none to listen.

WHO ARE THE DOOMED?

It has been said of Jesus: "He could save all others. Himself he could not save." It needs now to be said of the old radicals: They could save no one, and now they do not even want to save themselves. The one consoling feature is their impotence. Far from being capable of dooming the revolution, history will show them to be the doomed ones.

To read some of the many other writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on Latin America and the Caribbean, visit the Archives (to order, see p. 7). From 10/25/1962 Weekly Political Letter, "Marxist-Humanism vs. the U.S. Blockade of Cuba, the Russian Missile Bases There, Fidel Castro's 'Selective' Party, All Playing with Nuclear Holocaust":

Even without [the] bomb, [Fidel Castro] has moved so far away from the revolution he led that it is hard to see what he is making of Cuba other than a satellite of Russia, and I don't mean it only as a storer of missile bases, **but as an outpost of single party state-capitalism....**Anyone can...repeat generalizations of Marxism on the role of the working class. The proof, **the only proof**, that it is a way of life, not a mere weapon of propaganda, is its **realization in life**. No such thing is true in Fidel's Cuba, where not a single organ—from the trades unions to the peasant unions, from the state to the party—is any longer controlled by the working people.

Celebrate International Women's Day, March 8, and Women's History Month, with Raya Dunayevskaya's Trilogy of Revolution



On the Paris Commune: "The milkmaids, who were on the streets before dawn...surrounded the soldiers and prevented them from carrying out Thiers' orders. Although the men had not yet come into the streets on this early morning, and although the women were not armed, they held their own. As in every real peoples' revolution, new strata of the population were awakened. This time it was the women who were to act first." —Marxism and Freedom

"The reader will find especially cogent the fear the Black women's liberationist expressed that 'when it comes to putting down the gun' she might once again have a broom shoved into her hands. The problematic of the day, indeed, is contained in that question, 'What happens the day after the revolution?' That is precisely the uniqueness of today's forces of revolution which is the Reason as well, whether it be the Women's Liberation Movement, white and Black, or the youth." —Philosophy and Revolution

"Marx envisioned a totally new man, a totally new woman, a totally new life form (and by no means only for marriage)—in a word, a totally new society. That is why we still have so much to learn from Marx's concept of Man/Woman, not only in his abstract 1844 articulation, but in his empiric 1880 formulation when it was integrated with the need for total uprooting of capitalism and creation of a class-less society." —Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution

"...Women's Liberation is an illumination of Marx's vision of human development which he articulated as 'an absolute movement of becoming'....Marx extended the concept of Alienation to the Man/Woman relationship and to all life under capitalism. This is why he concluded that the system...needed nothing short of a 'revolution in permanence.' Clearly, that little word, dialectic, which comprised a critique of 'all that is'—that is, the 'negation of the negation'—opened a whole new continent of thought and of revolution."

—Women's Liberation and theDialectics of Revolution



See literature ad page 7 to order

PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE: *Marxism and Freedom Today*

Organizational Responsibility for Marxist-Humanism

All of philosophy consists in making explicit what is only implicit in the objective movement of history. An objective view of historical development of necessity reveals the subjective, the human force which will be the one to realize the forward movement of humanity. —Raya Dunayevskaya

When asked by Marcuse, who was writing the introduction to her book *Marxism and Freedom*, to summarize that work, Raya Dunayevskaya did so in a way that revealed how the book was making explicit what had been implicit in Marx (see "Philosophic Foundation of Marxism," Dec. 2008-Jan. 2009 *N&L*). First and foremost was the importance of establishing that Marx was no mere economist, but a philosopher, and that Marxism had a philosophic foundation grounded in the Hegelian dialectic. She showed that Marx's philosophic foundation was not limited to his early period when he wrote his *Humanist Essays*, but that it was developed from the young Marx, through the Marx who wrote the *Communist Manifesto*, to the mature author of that "most economic" work which is preferred by the academic economists—Volume III of *Capital*. Part of that Humanism is shown as well in how explicitly Dunayevskaya makes clear that all of "Marx's economic categories [are] social categories," and "are thoroughly permeated with the humanism that came out of the working-class struggles for the shortening of the working day."

HUMANISM, HISTORY AND THEORY

This humanism of Marx is inseparable from what Dunayevskaya called "the relationship of theory to history," which meant never dividing the two and including today's struggles—particularly working-class struggles—in what is meant by "history." She makes that element of Marxism explicit by showing that the "proof of this relationship of theory to history," is how objective events of Marx's time—including the Paris Commune and the Civil War in the U.S.—compelled

* Raya Dunayevskaya, 1963 Perspectives Thesis, "The Need to Transform Reality"; *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, # 3279; excerpts republished in the January/February 2001 *News & Letters*.

EDITORIAL

continued from p. 1

and so total that only the deepest uprooting of the system of capitalism that gives rise to them can respond to the fundamental changes that the American people are demanding, and that has turned all eyes first and foremost to the global economic crisis.

TODAYNESS OF MARX'S CAPITAL

There is no way to understand today's global economic crisis other than the way Marx's greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, marched onto the historic stage, as it did in the mid-1970s when his analysis of the law of motion of capitalism to its collapse became not only theory but fact. It was the point at which there was a structural change in capitalism, with constant capital (machinery) overwhelming variable capital (living, employed labor—the only source of value). The resulting decline in the rate of profit was followed by investment nearly stopping, while unemployment soared. That point of capitalism's development is what ensures the collapse of the system we are seeing today.

While there are great differences between now and then, and even greater differences between today and 1933 when Franklin Delano Roosevelt confronted a recognized world Depression, FDR's efforts then—as Obama's are now—were dictated by the goal of saving capitalism. But it took World War II to pull the U.S. out of the Depression and save capitalism.

Today the situation is so grim that youth are joining the armed forces at the risk of their lives to get work. And, under the impact of worsening economic developments, workers are planning demonstrations in Washington. At the same time, although the masses can be counted on to keep trying to push Obama to the Left, he has continued to convincingly demonstrate his intent to save capitalism, as seen in many of his appointments and pronouncements and in his proposed stimulus legislation.

FDR's creation of the New Deal was an effort to ward off the potential revolutionary situation at that moment. None are calling today such a moment. But that very fact is where the importance lies of the new relations promised by the numbers of white workers who broke beyond their concerns with race to vote for Obama. It is here where we can see the importance of creative new labor struggles such as the sit-down strike and victory of the workers of Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago. And it is all these developments that underline the meaning of the new series of discussions we have undertaken as "Confronting Today's Crises: the Marxist-Humanist return to Marx and the revolutionary abolition of capitalism."

him to make changes in *Capital*.

Thus, *Marxism and Freedom* made explicit the role of the intellectual. Marx's methodology, which shaped his completely new form of theoretical engagement with movements of his day, becomes concrete. Dunayevskaya wants her book to show today's intellectuals how they can re-create Marxism for our age by grasping his methodology. So important is this task to her that it takes up two points in her three-point summation at the end of her letter to Marcuse; and the three points are so tightly tied together they read to me as one. The "re-establishment of the philosophic foundation of Marxism in Hegel" is certainly unseparated from "the summation of all three volumes of Marx's *Capital* in a manner that the reader knows Marxism both as theory and as methodology"; and this is to become "so real" to the intellectual "that he could indeed discern the movement from practice to theory and as eagerly long for the unity of the two [the movement from practice and the movement from theory] as does the worker."

CREATING CATEGORIES

While Dunayevskaya's letter to Marcuse on *Marxism and Freedom* makes explicit in Marx's development his philosophic foundation in Hegel and its ramifications including a totally new kind of revolutionary intellectual, Tim Finnigan, in his article in the same issue, "On the 50th anniversary of *Marxism and Freedom*," revisits what is implicit in Dunayevskaya's own contribution. When he begins by singling out the book's new philosophic category, "the movement from practice that is itself a form of theory," it is to explore the power of making such a historic-philosophical category. He does this by bringing in a quote from Hegel's *Science of Logic*: "the greater extension is equally a higher intensity." Creating a category brings something into the world that has not been recognized before. It creates, therefore, a new reality. It is the new reality that makes a "greater extension" and "higher intensity" possible, because we are seeing and experiencing things in a very new way with a new illumination.

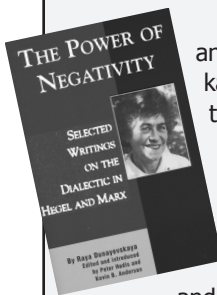
Finnigan cites Dunayevskaya on the process of making categories: "He who glorifies theory and genius but fails to recognize the limits of a theoretical work, fails likewise to recognize the indispensability of the theoretician. All of history is the history of the struggle for freedom. If, as a theoretician, one's ears are attuned to the new impulses from the workers, new 'categories' will be created, a new way of thinking, a step forward in philosophic cognition" (p. 89). This is what *Marxism and Freedom* accomplished, and it is a summation of the book. But he goes further in his short article in seeing that "the question of the dialectics of organization and philosophy was already present in 1958" in the book, in the category created about the movement from practice being itself a form of theory. He illustrates this in a deceptively short manner: simply by saying that "the 'indispensability of the theoretician' can be seen as the responsibility for Marxist-Humanism."

Why does the indispensability of the theoretician imply an organizational conclusion? While there are probably many answers, it seems to me that taking responsibility for an idea—when it is the Idea of Freedom, when it is about revolution and transforming our world, and if it is to be unseparated from the movement from practice that is itself a form of theory—it is not enough to write about it in a book. Rather it must be tested and practiced in an organization. Taking responsibility for the Idea of Freedom has to shape organization if we are to have a revolution that realizes all human potential.

—Terry Moon

The Power of Negativity

by Raya Dunayevskaya



Brilliant theorist, committed activist, and passionate scholar, Raya Dunayevskaya was a role model for my generation. We are fortunate to have her back in this wonderfully edited work.... In contrast to the boring pap of commodified culture and political sound bites, Raya's interpretation makes the logic of Hegel's absolute idea a fascinating and compelling read.

—Susan Buck-Morss, Cornell University

Part I: The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism

Part II: Studies in Hegelian and Marxian Dialectics, 1956-63

Part III: Theory and Practice at a Turning Point, 1964-71

Part IV: After Philosophy and Revolution: Hegel's Absolutes and Marx's Humanism, 1972-81

Part V: The Changed World and the Need for Philosophic New Beginnings, 1982-87

Appendix: Excerpts from 1941-51 Philosophic Correspondence with C.L.R. James and Grace Lee Boggs

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From Latin America

Dunayevskaya's 1957 letter to Herbert Marcuse on the crucial themes of *Marxism and Freedom* as it was going to press, began with "the philosophic foundation of Marxism." Not all philosophic thought transcends its own time. But radical Marxist thought, at least Marx's own writings, rooted in and at the same time re-founding Hegel's dialectic in the era of proletarian revolt, speaks in important ways to the present moment.

MARXISM AND FREEDOM WAS structured around historical movements from practice toward theory from the French Revolution to the European revolutions of Marx's day, to the Russian Revolution, and the mid-20th century revolts, revolutions and movements from below. Dunayevskaya demonstrated in the book, and emphasized in her letter, that such movements from below challenge the philosopher, the revolutionary theoretician, the radical intellectual, to reorganize his/her thought. Thus, she contrasted Hegel, Marx, and Lenin to Proudhon, Lassalle and other radical intellectuals who responded to their historic moments, and yet did not meet the challenge of fully reorganizing their thought to meet the emerging workers' praxis.

In Latin America today there are powerful emancipatory social movements. Whether one takes as the point of departure the Zapatista Indigenous rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico, 1994; or the *piqueteros* and then mass uprising in Buenos Aires, Argentina, as the 21st century opened—what is clear is that there is a dialectic of revolt from below that not only has confronted neo-liberal imperialism from abroad and its home-grown personifications within each country, but also has challenged radical activist-thinkers in Latin America to meet this movement from below with the construction of a liberatory project.

HOW IS THIS CHALLENGE being met? As opposed to the elitism of vanguard parties and of narrow guerilla focoism that dominated much of the action and discourse in Latin America from the 1960s through the 1980s, the 1990s to today witnessed a new appreciation of the movement from below in diverse social subjects, and the need for open, non-hierarchical organization. At the same time, there has not always been an effort to create theory that meets the masses' praxis. Often there has been an attitude that everything must come out of the movement from below, with theory being primarily a recording of the masses' self-activity.

This is not wholly the case. The Zapatistas for one, certainly in their Sixth Declaration from the Lacondon jungle, issued a theoretical document that was in their own words, anti-capitalist and from the Left. They have sought to develop their theory in response to the practices of Indigenous communities in the autonomous zones in Chiapas. Also, their document was not just a photocopy of the movement.

Another expression of theory has come from an active thinking about utopia in Latin America. The Latin American concept differs from the abstract utopian socialism of the mid-19th century that Marx critiqued. It was born in resistance to the imposition of European "utopias" upon Latin America, which were in fact living nightmares of exploitation and domination. Neo-liberalism led by U.S. capitalism has been the latest manifestation of this.

In contrast, in Latin America the concept of utopia, based on local experiences and Indigenous ways of doing and thinking, opened a space of social resistance in the present. An illuminating articulation of this comes from the liberation theology thinker Gustavo Gutierrez:

"Utopia, contrary to what current usage suggests, is characterized by its relation to present historical reality . . . Utopia necessarily means a denunciation of the existing order . . . But utopia is also an annunciation, an annunciation of what is not yet, but will be; it is the forecast of a different order of things, a new society. . . [Utopia is] subversive of the existing order. If utopia does not lead to action in the present, it is an evasion of reality" (*Theology of Liberation*, p. 233).

CAN SUCH AN EXPRESSION of utopia, as well as the Zapatistas' theoretical expressions, find a resonance in Marx's dialectic of a "thoroughgoing Naturalism or Humanism" that Dunayevskaya argues is "the philosophic foundation of Marxism"? I don't mean resonance only as an historic echo, but rather as a re-creation of Marx's Marxism in the present moment, which can fuse with the Latin American theory and praxis toward a new society.

At the November Social Forum of the Americas in Guatemala many participants, particularly Guatemalan Indigenous activists, were attracted by the title *Marxismo y Libertad* (*Marxism and Freedom*). Here in Mexico *Marxismo y Libertad* study groups have formed with activists in the Zapatista support movement.

Clearly, many Latin American activists are searching for emancipatory ideas, including Marxist-Humanism, in movements and organizations of resistance against conditions of exploitation and restriction.

—Eugene Walker

CAPITALISM IN CRISIS AND CLASS STRUGGLES TODAY

Albert Einstein once said "Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them." From that perspective, there is no solution for workers to the current crisis in our political economy. But it is not a problem to some. The bankers have received a cool \$700 billion with no questions asked which they are now using to buy banks and other assets at fire-sale prices. Problem? What problem?

But this greatest robbery in history is a problem for millions who are now receiving a lesson in the class struggle. They will not soon forget their bitter experience. During the course of the Russian Revolution the revolutionary Vladimir Ilyich Lenin stated that the laboring classes of Russia had gained more in class consciousness in the space of a few months than in the entire previous generation. This process is at work now. Today, with the internet, satellite and all manner of electronic communications, Lenin's space of a few months can be reduced to a matter of weeks or even days.

The government's purpose in the bailout was to preserve the system at all costs (paid by taxpayers-workers). Its view of the working class, especially since 9-11 under President Dubya, is full of contempt and threatens the freedoms that have been bitterly fought for. The workers have not yet realized their historic task but *News & Letters* will help them in this. It is now time for capitalism to be dumped on the ash heap of history.

**Retired Postal Worker
Battle Creek, Mich.**

In "One-sided class war in auto meltdown" (Dec.-Jan. *N&L*), Andy Phillips says workers who have lost their jobs are asking "where's my bailout?" It explains what's on the mind of the Republic Windows and Doors workers. It's what all workers are asking today about the system. The patient is dying because liquidity, its circulatory system, ground to a standstill. Workers know they are bailing the system out with their skins.

**Healthworker
California**

Marx was always listening to the working class. And he was a great theoretician. The movement for the eight-hour day was important to him. The Workshop Talks column in the Dec.-Jan. issue on "Marx on the shop floor"

recreates that aspect of what Marxism is. Obama being Black will not change much in the world. Capitalism will continue with him at the helm. During the Great Depression, the administration created jobs building roads and bridges and dams, but it was war-time production that ended unemployment. It was going to war that ended the Depression.

**Nonagenarian
San Francisco Bay Area**

The unprecedented Defense budget today isn't aimed only at existing wars but future ones. Gates, with Obama's blessing, is planning on mixing NASA—up to now strictly a civilian program—with Defense budgets, in order to deal with the threat China poses to the U.S. war machine in space. The colossal deficit spending becomes a "good investment" in the capitalist sense only after the war's massive destruction of capital—topped off in World War II with the first use of atomic weapons. That's what "saved" U.S. capitalism from full statification, as it was then able to restart the process of accumulation in a world where it alone had intact capital.

**Marxist-Humanist
California**

The Lead in the Dec.-Jan. *N&L* on the "Outpouring for Obama" points to something beyond Obama himself. The jubilation that followed wasn't because the Messiah came. It was that the masses felt they made a change.

**Supporter
Oakland, Cal.**

What Obama said about the economy and having to act swiftly and boldly is why white workers voted for a Black man. They rejected the last eight years. The "boldly and swiftly" I want to see more of is the workers taking over, like at Republic Windows and Doors.

**Worker and Writer
West Coast**

●

OBAMA AND THE MILITARY

I find it alarming that the media are referring to Mr. Obama as the "Commander-in-Chief" more often than as President, and that the same was done frequently under George W. Bush. I remember that the first president to publicly refer to himself as "Commander-in-Chief" was Jimmy Carter and that it caused quite a stir. It was always consid-

READERS' VIEWS

ered a civilian office, even under Dwight Eisenhower. This is a very ominous shift in attitude and reflects a further regression in our American political life. We need to pay attention to this.

**Observer
Oakland, Cal.**

It is said that President Obama wants to set a new tone. He wants to see a new language of reconciliation and engagement towards the Mid-East. He keeps referring to "mutual respect" and "partnership." It's very admirable, even if it sounds a bit too much like corporate-speak to someone like me. But as a Black man, he knows full well (as he expressed it so eloquently in a speech during the height of his pastor Rev. Wright's controversy over race) that before any reconciliation and fundamental change in human relations can occur, the truth about the past, in all its atrocities and exploitations, must first be told and acknowledged.

Progress requires consciousness of history and philosophy, not simply good intentions. While he speaks of "mutual respect" and "partnership," history in the present is staring at him in the face, in the form of the bombing raids over Gaza, and recent troop increases towards the war in Afghanistan. If that's change, then keep the change.

**Asian-American
California**

●

GAZA'S AGONY

The over 1.5 million people of Gaza live in abject poverty. More than 80% earn under \$2 a day. Officially, over half the working population is unemployed. Hunger and malnutrition, lack of sanitation, medical care, sewer systems and clean water has made Gaza a disaster zone even before Israel's 22-day invasion. The tiny strip is not economically viable even without the air, sea and land blockade imposed by Israel—a clear violation of the cease-fire accord reached between Israel and Hamas.

Israel drastically restricted the number of trucks carrying food, fuel and water into Gaza early in November from 123 to just 16 trucks a day, down from a peak of 475 back in 2007. An underground economy was created, carried out through the tunnels. It is true that Hamas also uses these tunnels to smuggle arms. But the greater fact is that the Palestinians of Gaza could not subsist without them. As always, truth is the first casualty of war.

**Middle-Easterner
Oakland, Cal.**

Here is an excerpt of a leaflet dropped by Israel into Gaza before a recent bombing: "As a result of the acts undertaken by terrorists in your area against Israel, the IDF is forced to respond immediately and take action in this area. For your own safety, you are asked to leave the area immediately." Needless to say, there is nowhere to go. Gaza is a tiny area—10% the size of Rhode Island, densely occupied, and all the borders are sealed shut. But Israelis are still repeating the mantra that turns my stomach: "The IDF is the most moral army in the world."

Throughout these horrific weeks, the most carefully documented reports inside Israel of what is and isn't actually happening have been those of the human rights organizations.

The peace organizations continue raising their brave and lonely voices to the ongoing vilification by "patriotic" passers-by. Here's what I wrote on my sign: "We have become our own worst nightmare." Most passers-by didn't get it.

**Gila Svirsky
Jerusalem**

THE MOMENT LENIN MISSED?

I always enjoy being informed of events in the USA as you report them. But I was particularly impressed by your article on then President-Elect Obama. I also found the article by Tom More on Lenin interesting, although I would have preferred it to sound a little less sectarian. While I sympathize with your desire to propagate the ideas of Raya Dunayevskaya, this must be done in a way that does not lead people to reject them. I recognize it is a difficult line to tread.

**Contributor
Australia**

Apart from her direct questioning of Lenin in her 1953 *Letters on Hegel's Absolutes*, Dunayevskaya had only very light criticism of Lenin all the way until she wrote *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. Her criticism emerged through Lenin's engagement with Hegel, which gave a different view of his ideas in the context of the objectivity of ideas. The thread through which we engage Lenin's limitations was very specific and it goes through what he did see, and what could have taken him in a different direction.

**Ron Brokmeyer
Oakland, Cal.**



VOICES FROM WITHIN THE WALLS

Every issue gets better. I especially like the articles on Raya and Karl Marx. In the Dec.-Jan. 2009 issue my favorite was about the "Outpouring for Obama" points beyond election to full freedom." I found it important that your article on Obama mentioned Abraham Lincoln. It let me know I was not alone in thinking along those lines. I am speaking along the same lines at a meeting of the Gavel Club here.

**Prisoner
Florida**

I was so happy to read and study Raya Dunayevskaya's Marxism and Freedom. I know the best way to demonstrate my appreciation is by taking what I glean from it and trying to make it concrete. I hope to do it because now, more than ever before, the economic crisis that capitalism has created needs to be adequately explained. Just because imperialist capital has a Black face won't alter its absolute general law of motion.

**Prisoner
Pelican Bay, Cal.**

I read the article by Terry Moon on "Military murders and cover-ups." I am wondering if it is possible to compile the names of all the women who died since the U.S. war started in Iraq. I'd like to include it in something I'm writing. Despite what has been reported and published, more cover-ups continue and it must be made known for the bloodshed to stop.

**Prisoner
Coalinga, Cal.**

I love *News & Letters* for offering information and insight that is generally suppressed by regular channels, and for being an outlet that represents grass-roots struggles throughout the world. I share it with fellow prisoners, who are beginning to also see the reality beyond their indoctrination.

**Prisoner
California**

CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

It is heartening to see that the first legislation President Obama signed into law, nine days after his inauguration, was a victory for the rights of women workers. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act corrects John Roberts' disgusting Supreme Court decision in 2007 that gutted the ability of women workers to sue for wage discrimination if they did not file within 180 days of the initial decision, even if the victim is unaware of the discrimination until much later. Now 70, Ms. Ledbetter, who attended the bill signing, worked for Goodyear Tire & Rubber for 19 years before she discovered she was being paid less than men doing the same job. Unfortunately, the new law will not allow her to claim lost wages or the \$360,000 court settlement she was awarded, or to receive a pension based on the wages she should have received. But she said, "I have an even richer reward—that future generations of women will have a better chance at fair pay."

Mary Jo Grey
Chicago

I've met many Leftists who act as if it doesn't make any difference who is president of the U.S. They even said this about Bush—as if capitalism doesn't have a human face. In many cases it is a matter of life and death. That is clearly seen in how every Republican since Ronald Reagan has created or reinstated the global gag rule, that outlaws international family-planning groups from even talking about abortion if they receive any money from the U.S., no matter what it is used for. That rule has been directly responsible for the deaths of thousands of women. You don't have to be under the illusion that Obama is going to challenge capitalism rather than devote himself to keeping it going, to still think it is a good thing that Bush—who directly caused so many deaths either by war or policy—is finally gone.

Feminist
Memphis

There's a new government report showing huge increases in reported do-

mestic violence, rape, and sexual assault in the U.S. over a two-year period. It's important to emphasize the word "reported," as most assaults go unreported. While a more accurate survey may explain some of the increase, there is no doubt the militarization of U.S. society since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is involved. Rape and sexual abuse by men returning from those wars have skyrocketed.

Women's Liberationist
Illinois

Looking at women in the military as in Terry Moon's column in the Dec.-Jan. *N&L*, is the humanist way of confronting militarism, not just decrying the military as an arm of U.S. imperialism. I had nightmares for several days after reading the story from Somalia in that same issue. We need to be able to tell a story like this not just as an example of cruelty but as an outrage against everyone's humanity.

The Lesbian activist's critiques of a variety of tendencies within that movement show the importance of recognizing that the media spokespeople don't represent those who are in the movement.

Urszula Wislanka
California

It is good to know that three major feminist groups—the Feminist Majority Foundation, The National Organization for Women, and the California National Organization for Women—have submitted an amicus brief to the California Supreme Court in support of legal challenges to Proposition 8, which overturned the right to same-sex marriage in the state. That Proposition would also jeopardize fundamental constitutional rights for women, including the right to decide whether or not to bear a child, the right of sexual privacy, and the right not to be discriminated against in employment. The Court is expected to hear oral arguments in the case in March, the month we celebrate International Women's Day.

Lifelong Feminist
Illinois

PROTESTS DO HELP

According to the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration, there were 51 miners killed last year, the lowest on record. A part of this is undoubtedly due to the recent coal mine tragedies in Utah, Kentucky and West Virginia that created a national outrage from the public and resulted in new legislation that called for mandatory mine inspections and led to the hiring last year of 360 more inspectors. The record low of 51 killed last year compares with 67 killed in 2007 and 73 in 2006.

Ex-miner
Detroit

Canada's New Democratic Party has switched its official position from being against the war in Afghanistan to supporting it. The reversal comes as the NDP joins the pro-war Liberal Party in a coalition designed to unseat the ruling Conservative party government. Progressives and anti-war organizations are shocked at the switch. Please express your outrage and protest at this shocking support of the U.S. War of Terror in Afghanistan. It is hoped that enough protests both at home and abroad may see the NDP switch positions back to a principled opposition. No to Canadian War in Afghanistan! No to NDP Warmongering!

John J.
Memphis

BISCUIT PRODUCERS STRIKE

One hundred thirty-five Stella D'Oro workers in New York have been on strike since Aug. 13, 2008. The members of Local 50, Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) are mostly Latina, Asian and African immigrants. They are being asked to contribute an additional \$1.32 per hour to their insurance, accept wage cuts of up to 24%, lose holidays and overtime pay. The company had tried to divide the workers in different job classifications, but all of them agreed to strike. The Committee in Support of the Stella

D'Oro Strikers has organized marches and a benefit concert planned for Apr. 4. They are asking individuals to boycott Stella D'Oro products. For more information go to www.stelladorostrike2008.com.

Supporter
New York

DISCOVERING MARXIST-HUMANISM

I received a copy of *News & Letters* at the protest for Gaza in Westwood. I have looked at it enough to know that it is worthwhile, especially the letters from readers in the center of the paper—as central to the overall message. Raya Dunayevskaya is a new name in socialism for me. I like seeing the assertion of a feminist socialist affinity up front and center to the overall message of the paper. I will read and write you more.

New Reader
Los Angeles

When I heard about *Marxism and Freedom* in 1970, my initial reaction was "Marxism and WHAT?!" I had been a Civil Rights Movement supporter and anti-Vietnam War activist who shunned theory and had an aversion to vanguard groups purporting to have the answers. But I have come to appreciate what Dunayevskaya accomplished with this book, as she succinctly states in her letter to Herbert Marcuse in the Dec.-Jan. *N&L*: to "re-establish the philosophic foundation of Marxism in Hegel in so concrete a way that the origins of our machine age as well as the latest period of automation come alive..." Fifty years after publication, that is still true. It is our job to help the freedom struggles of 2009 realize this as they seek full freedom for all.

Marxist-Humanist
New York

Have you sent in your contribution to help keep News & Letters going?

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02-03/09

Thousands oppose police brutality

Oakland, Cal.—On the early morning of Jan. 1, 2009, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police pulled several young Black men off a train supposedly for fighting. Oscar Grant was lying face down on the platform with his hands cuffed behind his back when Officer Mehserle pulled out his gun and shot him in the back, killing him. The initial reaction of the authorities was for Oakland Police Department (OPD) to say they have no jurisdiction, because the incident took place at a BART station. BART failed to even take a statement from their own officers. Instead, they claimed they didn't know what happened, because the cameras pointing at the platform supposedly only transferred images to the agent on duty, that they did not record.

There were, however, videos taken by other passengers. The lack of response by anyone in authority angered many. Thousands came out on Jan. 9 to the Fruitvale BART station shutting it down for hours, then marching to city hall. At the end of the demonstration windows of downtown businesses were smashed and a trash container was set on fire. Another demonstration was called for Jan. 14. That morning police finally arrested Mehserle, hoping to defuse the situation. Thousands came again to city hall to demand justice for Oscar Grant. Following are statements from protesters. —Editors

I feel that the authorities could be doing a better job right now. As for BART and OPD working together, that would be a great thing, but I honestly don't think that this issue is going to be dealt with in a way that will satisfy the public if we leave it in the hands of BART and OPD. We need to bring in some third party resources to get this job done, to get it resolved quickly.

Almost everybody has seen the videos (of Mehserle shooting Oscar Grant). We know what we saw. But we can't jump to conclusions. From what I saw, it could be that the officer didn't mean to do it. I don't know what was in his mind. He needs to make a statement about what happened, come out and say you're sorry. If it was a mistake, taking a human life is a pretty terrible mistake. How do you live with yourself?

I don't know BART procedures. Even if they were justified in pulling the youth off the train, using excessive force after they subdued them was clearly wrong.

—M. A.

We need justice for Oscar. It is not fair how they look at people based on color, especially in Oakland. It is one thing to arrest him. It is quite different to shoot a man lying on his stomach with his hands cuffed. We can't live like this, we can't let the police get away with it as though nothing happened. That will just let them continue to do what they're doing. We have to put a stop to it.

—A Youth Together student from Mission High School

We are protesting more than the murder of Oscar Grant. What is important is people coming together to

protest injustice, to confront it, to organize, to make a change.

I don't expect anything but cosmetic changes to come out from this particular campaign around Oscar Grant. They will treat it as an isolated, individual event and try to appease it as that. But people coming together like this creates a space where other questions can be raised, other issues brought up and challenged.

I would like to see a challenge to the way police create a state of emergency in poor Black communities and specifically target young Black men. I would like to see a challenge to the state and the way the state is operating, the systems and levels on which it functions.

Just putting Mehserle in prison will not do that. There needs to be another way to hold them accountable. We need to come together and shut down the city.

The powerful thing about this demonstration is that right now everything is shutting down in downtown Oakland. Downtown Oakland represents big business. When big business' money stops moving then they take notice, they treat it as a crisis, as an important issue.

These kinds of things are going to keep happening. As we are pulling out of the war in Iraq, there are other wars popping up around the world. The governments are attempting to suppress, not the murders or the deaths, but the attention that is going to these issues. We are going to see more violence here, because you can't have violence all around the world and not have violence at home.

So we will continue to see police incidents like this, and other episodes of violence, especially in such a desperate time for the economy when everyone is stretched as thin as they can be.

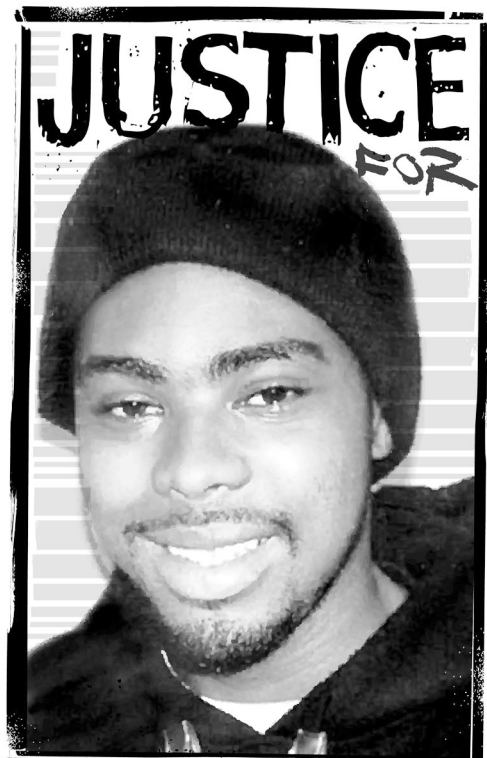
We are tracked into a culture of coming out to complain and then going home. But we could shut down the state functions and cripple the state to the point that they will have to recognize and actually confront the issues at hand.

—Hannibal

BART officials want to justify the shooting by claiming the officer "may have made a mistake, that he was only reaching for his Taser." How in the world can anyone justify using even a Taser when a man is already down? There is absolutely *no justification*.

Officer Mehserle merely pulled the trigger. But the system was already there. He was nothing more than a cog in its wheel. He essentially did only what he was trained to do. *Not* to "protect and serve" but to *kill*. How is his training any different from all the "trained" youth sent to Iraq? Too many youth like Oscar Grant get killed in the U. S. streets. Killed by yet too many youth carrying guns, regardless whether they are wearing the badge or not. Real justice needs to go a lot deeper, all the way to the roots. Focus on the system, not just the individual culprit.

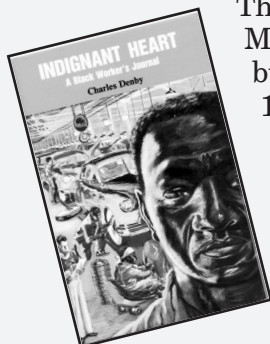
—T. C.



Tony Carranza/East Bay Arts Alliance

OSCAR GRANT

Celebrate Black History Month



The 80% who boycotted Montgomery's segregated buses that first day (in 1956) was more than anyone could believe. Rev. King thought, like everyone else, that it was just going to be one day. But when the Blacks went back to the bus

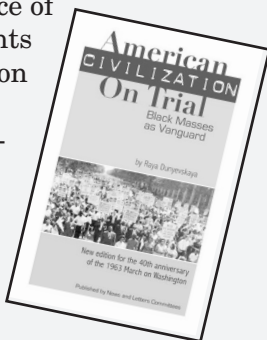
stop...the (white) bus drivers went by without picking them up. The reaction of the Black masses was "We walked yesterday...we can walk today." And they kept on walking from that day on—for over nine months—until they won.

Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal
—by Charles Denby

Cost: \$15 and \$8, respectively, special \$20 for both (including postage), order on p. 7

The continuing importance of this work is that it presents the Black masses in motion as the touchstone of the development of all American history...(It) remains alive because it never separated history as past from history that is still in the making...It shows that the contradictions in the movements for freedom cannot be overcome without working out a unity of the movement from practice and the movement from theory as the foundation for an overall philosophy that can form the foundation of a new human social order.

American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard
—by Raya Dunayevskaya



BLACK/REDVIEW

continued from p.1

what Obama faces today and what Roosevelt faced in 1932 and 1933?

Alan: Roosevelt faced the Great Depression when millions of Americans were out of work, when poverty existed in every section of the country. He set up social programs to feed the unemployed, to house them, etc. Later, of course, he went to war. I was drafted during that period.

Mel: As someone who has lived through that era, did you feel that the WPA projects helped get people back jobs, and the economy moving?

Alan: What people got during the Depression was relief. They set up those institutions to feed and to house the people that were unemployed, that had no place to live. These were the social programs that came out of the Roosevelt administration. There were tremendous movements against this type of life. They were organized by the trade unions, by African Americans and other groups who were being totally oppressed by that great unemployment. We eventually got out of that when Roosevelt went to war.

Mel: Thomas Friedman, a contemporary author, indicated that we have never gotten out of the Great Depression, that we simply have gone into different wars: WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. We have had great economic times since then, but it seems that the U.S. is on a destined path of resolving economic problems by going to war.

Alan: Yes, I think that's true. But I don't think this country can resolve the problem by going to war forever. It's going to have to find some new solution to this problem of unemployment, poverty, and even U.S. racism, which has not been wiped out. Maybe we have to be very honest that it is capitalism itself that brings these things into being. Whether the president is liberal or conservative, whether he's old or young, it is the very nature of the system that determines politics and the types of social movements that make changes in the U.S. economy. I think that social movements have been more important than presidents. They have brought about changes that no president was capable of thinking about or bringing into being. The greatness of the U.S. depends on the activity of American people, American workers. These are the people that have made this country great, not the man who sits in the White House.

Mel: Your point is well taken....This is not only a man, but it is a movement and it is the movement that has brought about change. Do you see someone like Obama moving from Left to center and from center to Right?

Alan: I am not saying he is going to be guilty of doing that, but it could happen. The main interest of this country has to be supported by the president, regardless of what his race is. And we know what the main interest of this country is, it's a country of big corporations, a country that has to expand its capital in order to exist. This is the very nature of the system itself.

Mel: Obama is refreshing, however, in that he is coming from the Left, as a community organizer from the South Side of Chicago where you lived for years. Can he be the first president not to veer to the right of center? I think that's the ultimate test for this guy.

Alan: It's the ultimate test, but how and when is that ultimate test tested?

Mel: I think it's tested Jan. 21, 2009. This young guy is going to be on the hot seat. Your prediction is something we all look to in the future.

Alan: We have never had a real revolutionary figure in the White House. The whole purpose and history of this country has been to accumulate wealth and power. Some people will say that interest is to achieve freedom and democracy. But freedom and democracy come forward only when masses of people fight for them. I don't think we have an example of the White House leading any such movement. That is a view of a man who is 92 years old. I have lived through the Great Depression, and I have seen that the relief has come when the tremendous mass forces demanded and got it. No great change ever comes from Congress or the White House. It comes from the people's struggle for freedom.



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Revolt in Iceland

Barack Obama was taking over the Presidency in the U.S. on Jan. 20, when thousands of demonstrators surrounded Iceland's *Althingi* House as it tried to open a new session. Founded in 930, the *Althingi* is the world's oldest continuous and still surviving legislative body. Protesters threw eggs and the now emblematic old shoes at the parliament. Protesters had also occupied the cabinet office and Landsbanki, the country's second largest bank.

The object of the wrath of this normally very reserved population was the conservative government of Prime Minister Geir Haarde, whose car was pelted with eggs and besieged by protesters banging on windows, as he left the parliament on Jan. 21. The protesters were demanding accountability for Iceland's economic collapse—demanding that Haarde's government step down. The conservatives deregulated Iceland's banks, which then became global players in the speculative boom building up huge paper wealth.

In October Iceland's three largest banks went bankrupt and then so did the country as a whole when the state nationalized the banks in order to keep credit flowing. Now Iceland owes six times the country's national output to the world banking system. The government had to apply to the IMF, which normally is used by underdeveloped countries, for an emergency \$2 billion loan. Other sources lent another \$8 billion. The currency, the krona, has tanked to half its value, as unemployment and inflation have skyrocketed.

FIRST OPENLY GAY WORLD LEADER

Haarde's government wasn't scheduled to face elections until 2011, but then announced they would be held in May. By the end of January, however, the Haarde government failed and a new interim prime minister, Johanna Sigurdardottir, was appointed. Sigurdardottir will be the world's first openly Gay leader. She also comes from a working background, having been a flight attendant in the 1960s and '70s, a union organizer, and, as social affairs minister, a persistent fighter for minorities, women and the poor.

Iceland is a country of about 300,000 people, which had one of the highest standards of living. Enforcing their will and toppling their government, workers gave Iceland's capitalists a taste of direct democracy. Their direct action was probably more in the spirit of the original *Althingi*. Hopefully, this is only the beginning of workers deepening their practice of direct democracy as the way to totally overcome capitalist relations. Demonstrations over similar issues have already spread throughout Europe. In France, for example, a general strike against bank bailouts occurred on Jan. 29.

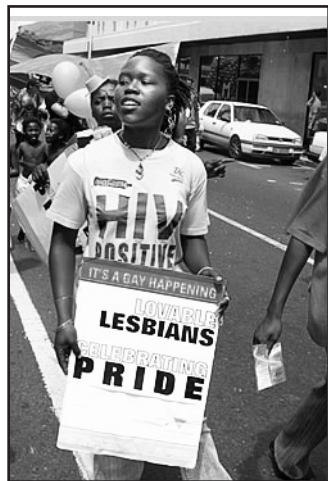
—R. K.

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

In the ongoing struggle to have 14-year-old Brandon McInerney, who killed his openly Gay classmate Larry King in Oxnard, Cal., tried as a juvenile, defense attorneys requested the case be refiled in juvenile court because McInerney had no prior record and his life circumstances were never considered. His attorneys are also appealing Superior Court Judge Riley's rejection of their motion to obtain the District Attorney's office documents used to conclude that McInerney should be tried as an adult.

* * *



Several days after hosting the 15th International Conference on AIDS and STIs (sexually transmitted infections) and in direct violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights against arbitrary arrest and detention, Senegal authorities arrested nine men who were HIV- and AIDS-prevention workers. It is feared that these arrests, combined with

their eight-year prison sentences for apparently only the suspicion of homosexual sex, will deter others from helping victims of HIV and AIDS.

* * *

Another Memphis Transgendered woman was attacked in December. Leeneshia Edwards, shot in the face and in critical condition, is the fourth hate crimes victim in Memphis in three years. Last December, Duanna Johnson died after being shot. (See Oct.-Nov. 2008 and Dec. 2008-Jan. 2009 *N&L*.) According to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, 23 of 56 anti-Gay hate crimes reported in 2007 in the state occurred in Memphis.

—from outandaboutnewspaper.com

Queer radicalism—struggle continues

That's Revolting! is an important, exciting and profound reminder of the true meaning of the word "radicalism" in a time when even social justice activists often think that the word means a mindless quest to hold the most extreme views possible. The book describes how the Gay Liberation Movement, which began with the Stonewall Rebellion in 1969, started off as radical, that is, as desiring a solution to all oppressions and seeing Queer oppression as interwoven with them. This movement viewed Queerness as inherently a threat to an oppressive order of patriarchy, capitalism, and imperialism and at the same time a celebration of creativity, sexuality, and community.

The mainstream Gay rights movement that emerged from that radical beginning now mostly concentrates on achieving assimilation and success within capitalism for white, middle-class, gender-conforming, "straight-acting" and able-bodied Gays and Lesbians. (This is also the way a positive Gay identity is usually portrayed in television shows.) This approach leaves out not only Bisexual, Transgender, "gender-nonconforming" (or "Genderqueer") and Intersexed people, it also leaves out others including people of color, poor people, and people with disabilities.

The early Gay Liberation Movement not only recognized that many Queer people also belong to these other groups but saw Queers as allies who must fight all oppression. In contrast, the Gays who achieve success in the capitalistic mainstream world sometimes use their privilege to oppress others. For example, Gay property and business owners often fight to arrest



That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation, edited by Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore (Soft Skull Press, 2007)

homeless Queer youth of color and have even opposed a neighborhood homeless shelter. In another example, a San Francisco LGBT center sponsored a fundraiser for the conservative, anti-poor politician Gavin Newsom and allowed police to violently bash protesters. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) also supports conservative politicians.

This book relates the history of some early Gay liberation groups such as the Gay Liberation Front and individuals such as Silvia Rivera, a Transgendered activist for Queer homeless youth. More importantly, it describes the flamboyant activism of some of the many recent radical Queer groups, from the 1990s to the present, who continue to hold the values of the early movement. Gay Shame interrupts corporate-sponsored Pride parades with "Gay Shame Awards" for those who support gentrification and war. FIERCE! is an organization of Queer homeless youth who hold vigils for victims of homophobic and transphobic murders and organize to reclaim public spaces and resources. Activists also describe their participation in the 1999 demonstration against the World Trade Organization and activists who are both Queer and Jewish discuss their activism in support of Palestine.

The book also contains personal stories and a lot of thoughtful discussion by individuals and activist groups about how oppressions are interrelated and what Queer culture brings to the struggle. There is discussion of the importance of sexual liberation in disconnecting shame from sexual desire and stopping the persecution of sexual minorities. Some writers criticize the goal of legalizing same-sex marriage, writing that all of the benefits it confers can be more fairly distributed to all people by other means. This is controversial and may be a starting point for a longer discussion.

That's Revolting! is relevant because the radical Queer movement is undergoing an even stronger resurgence today with the protests against Proposition 8 and with the continuing struggle against anti-Transgender violence. It is important in helping readers understand the philosophies of this movement and why it is relevant to all people.

—Adele

News and Letters Committees invites you to a series of five discussions on:

Confronting Today's Crises: The Marxist-Humanist Return to Marx and the Revolutionary Abolition of Capitalism



Burning of the Landsbanki flag as Iceland's economy melts down, an example of the many crises in the world

Capitalism's destructiveness is seen in unemployment, economic uncertainty, the world food crisis, endless wars, ever-growing prison populations and police repression, resurgent racism, anti-immigrant hysteria, homophobia and sexism, and the havoc wrought by global warming. Obama's election cannot solve these problems. People are looking for a deeper change—for a new human society.

This discussion series tackles these questions by digging into the Marxist-Humanist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya's original contribution, which established continuity with Marx. The classes include discussion of writings by workers, contemporary thinkers on green-collar economy, and 21st century socialism.

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This discussion series is about how to prepare ourselves for helping a new human society be born and getting rid of capitalism and all the rotten human relations we suffer now; for the struggles and labor, the setbacks and traps, the negations and openings, revolutions and counter-revolutions.

The idea of the book we're working on to collect writings of Raya Dunayevskaya on Marx is to internalize the philosophy needed and to project it to the world, and these classes are to help us work that out as we prepare for the revolutionary abolition of this still racist, sexist, homophobic capitalist society.

--Franklin Dmitryev

London protest against the war in Iraq



Gaza shows need for total uprooting

continued from p. 1
if it so chooses. The blockade of Gaza continues.
Much of the situation in Gaza is inexplicable without looking at the various rivalries that involve many parties besides Israel and the Palestinians. This includes the continuing struggle between the fundamentalist Hamas and Fatah, which controls the Palestinian Authority and West Bank. Even while under attack by Israel, Hamas put some of its military effort into attacking Fatah members—they succeeded in killing and maiming many more of them than they did Israeli soldiers, at least 80-100 according to witnesses.

This helps to explain the otherwise incredible fact that in the face of Israel's largest military incursion in decades there was no military unity among Palestinians. Only the marginal PFLP (General Command), a tool of the Syrian state, launched a single, random rocket from Lebanon that blew up the kitchen of a retirement home in northern Israel.

REGIONAL RIVALRIES

There was no unity among the Arab states, either, owing to regional rivalries between Hamas' Iranian patrons and the equally reactionary fundamentalist rulers of Saudi Arabia. While there was a lot of rhetoric from Hezbollah, they are constrained by the opposition of the Lebanese people to any new war with Israel.

The conflict between Egypt and Hamas is also significant. Hamas is an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, and that fundamentalist group is seen as a threat to the Mubarak regime in Egypt. Egypt has aided Israel's blockade of Gaza, and as much as anyone, it was the Egyptian government that gave Israel the green light to attack.

The Syrian-based leadership of Hamas distinguished itself by opposing any cease-fire and being ready, from the safety of Damascus, to fight to the last Palestinian. Even Hamas' Gaza leadership couldn't stomach this. To indicate how deep the lack of principle runs here, it is instructive to note that Hamas' leader, Khaled Mashaal, accepts the hospitality and support of the same Syrian Baathist government that massacred 2,000 imprisoned Islamists in 1982. It also destroyed the city of Hama killing 20,000 civilians, in the course of repressing its own Muslim Brotherhood.

This should illuminate his callous willingness to sacrifice the people of Gaza. In this Mashaal is certainly within hailing distance of the Sharon of 1982 and the Sabra and Shatila massacres. It is only the other side of Hamas' reactionary fantasy of destroying Israel which doesn't shrink from referencing the *Protocols of Zion*—counter-revolutionary forgeries of the czarist secret police and "Black Hundreds" pogromists.¹

The devastation wrought by the war should also help lay to rest the myth of Hamas as a "good government" alternative to the undeniable corruption of Fatah and the Palestinian Authority. Their launching of hundreds of rockets into Israel, sometimes killing civilians, which became the stated justification for Israel's attack, is barbarous and nihilistic. In the end Hamas may have hoped to duplicate Hezbollah's experience in 2006, but 2009 is not 2006 and they greatly overreached.

Although there have been declarations of "victory" and rallies, in the words of one Gazan: "We can't talk about real victory because there were thousands of martyrs and we didn't liberate anything. It's no time for a parade."

OPPOSITION TO WAR

As against the horrors of this war, there were also many protests and important efforts at solidarity. The Free Gaza Movement attempted to deliver medical aid by boat, but was prevented from docking and rammed by an Israeli navy vessel. International aid, including ambulances, medicine and food, was also sent from European trade unions to the General Federation of Palestinian Trade Unions, which put out a call for such support. The war-weariness among Gazans was well expressed by one Palestinian woman who confronted a Hamas member passing out leaflets: "Why are you handing out paper instead of bread?"

The Israeli peace movement was in the street from the first hours declaring, "This is not our war!" Adam Keller of *The Other Israel* wrote, "At record speed, a

rendezvous for protest was suggested by the Coalition of Women for Peace and quickly taken up by Hadash, Gush Shalom, the anarchists, Tarabut and also the Meretz grassroots network. The message spread among all by word of mouth and phone and email and Facebook: 'Stop the War!'" The voices of past refuseniks and the Shministim made their opposition known.

It is vital to hear these voices of opposition (see "Woman as Reason," p. 2). Even more, the war's regional aspect highlights the importance of all the new forces of revolution rising in the Middle East. There are new militant voices, from striking textile workers in Egypt, many of them women, to the new struggles of workers and women in Iraq represented by groups like the Iraqi Freedom Congress, and the simmering discontent among all sectors of the population in Iran with the oppressive theocracy there.

Mired in corruption and scandal, and hard hit by the 80% collapse in oil prices brought on by capitalist crisis, almost the only "legitimacy" the Iranian regime can cling to is its sponsorship of the "resistance" of Hezbollah and Hamas. Lebanon's Shi'a and the Palestinians of Gaza have paid a high price for this sponsorship, in having their genuine freedom struggles shackled to Iran's counter-revolution.²

PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLUTION

In addition to the cost in human lives, Israel's war has deflected attention from the brave new struggles in the region. It has the effect of sucking the oxygen from the very air of thought. Not only in the Middle East. This is a moment when every big imperialist power, the U.S., Russia, China, as well as a regional power like Iran, is confronted with the most serious capitalist crisis in decades.

It isn't a coincidence that the Iranian regime has intensified repression of late, including closing down Shirin Ebadi's Center for Defenders of Human Rights and fomenting attacks on her office and home, and closing the newspaper *Kargozaran* for publishing an article critical of Hamas. What Iran's rulers really fear is that despite their best efforts the Iranian people will eventually rise up and throw them out as they did the Shah.

In this regard, it is also vital that the new forces of revolution become rooted in a philosophy of revolution that can help them avoid the kind of halfway houses and outright disasters that have destroyed past freedom movements. To this end News and Letters Committees published *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East* (2003) containing Raya Dunayevskaya's writings on the dialectics of revolution and counter-revolution across the region, in Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran.

Dunayevskaya addressed this burning question for Middle Eastern revolutionaries in many ways, as in 1976's "Lebanon: The test not only of the PLO but the whole Left." Here she criticized revolutionaries who were pulled into the orbit of reactionary state powers, ushering in decades of civil war and occupation in Lebanon: "This does not mean that we give up the struggle for self-determination, Palestinian especially. It is that we do not narrow our vision of the revolutionary struggle for a totally different world, on truly new Humanist foundations, the first necessity of which is the unity of philosophy and revolution."³

Bringing about this unity of philosophy and revolution remains the task. News and Letters Committees has held to this principle since our founding in 1955: "The necessity for a new society is clear from the working people's opposition to war. That opposition is based upon a vision of a new society in which they, to a man, woman and child, control their own lives. Any opposition to war, which is based on less than this, must end in capitulation to the warmongers."⁴

The stakes couldn't be higher. Israel's war on the people of Gaza is not a local anomaly, it is the expression of the degeneracy of crisis-ridden state-capitalism. The absolute opposite of that is not any narrow nationalism or religion-infused drive for power, but the total uprooting of racist, sexist capitalist society in all countries and the creation of totally new human relations.

¹ "What more could [right-wing Zionism] have wished for than that the Israeli opponents of their own rulers—the Israeli Left engaged in class struggles and in fights against their country's foreign policy, especially to Israel's non-recognition of the Palestinians as a national entity entitled to self-determination—should suddenly pause in their struggles, with worry over whether at the other end of the spectrum lurks that perennial manifestation of degeneracy, anti-Semitism?" ("The UN resolution on Zionism—and the ideological obfuscation also on the Left," Raya Dunayevskaya, *Weekly Political Letter*, Jan. 24, 1976.)
² The Iranian Marxist Mansoor Hekmat described this relation: "The problem is still fundamentally the Palestinian question. Just as this confrontation strengthens the reactionary religious factions in Israel and gives them much more power—disproportionate to their actual minor weight in people's culture and beliefs, it also adds to the lifespan of political Islam..." (*Porsesh, A Quarterly Journal of Politics, Society and Culture*, Number 3, Winter 2001.)
³ "Lebanon: the test not only of the PLO but the whole Left," Raya Dunayevskaya, *Weekly Political Letter*, August, 1976.
⁴ From the "Preamble" to the News and Letters' Committees' *Constitution*, 1955.

Sri Lanka repression

The Sri Lankan government has captured Mullativu, the last stronghold of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The current fighting pits about 50,000 government troops against an estimated 1,000 remaining LTTE fighters.

Amnesty International reports that up to 300,000 civilians have been placed at risk in the current fighting. Many have been killed by government shelling, despite the provision of supposed "safe zones." Others have been prevented from reaching medical care by the LTTE fighters. There is a shortage of food and lack of shelter. According to Amnesty International, "A doctor working in a hospital in a 'safe zone' says that about 1,000 shells fell around the hospital."

The civil war in Sri Lanka between the government and LTTE has claimed more than 70,000 lives. The LTTE has fought for Tamil independence from the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan state. A truce in 2002 left the LTTE in control of a significant part of Sri Lanka, but the current government repudiated that agreement last year and launched an all-out attack. They took Kilinochchi, the rebel capital, on Jan. 2.

Sri Lanka has also seen a recent wave of attacks upon the press. On Jan. 2, *Sunday Leader* newspaper editor Lasantha Wickremetunga, an investigative journalist, was shot and killed in Colombo on his way to work. Maharaja Television was bombed after being labeled "unpatriotic" for its coverage of the government's war on the LTTE. In the most recent incident, gunmen on motorbikes wounded Upali Tenakoon, a Sri Lankan newspaper editor, and his wife.

The home of human rights lawyer J.C. Weliamuna was also attacked with a hand grenade late last year. He has been active in cases involving torture, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances.

—G.E.

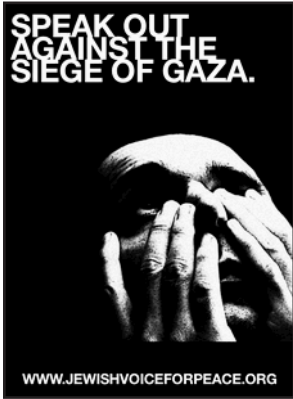
Palestinians and Jews at Chicago Gaza vigil

Chicago—On Jan. 4 I took part in a Jewish Voice for Peace vigil in support of the people of Gaza. Many Palestinians joined us. There were Palestinian flags, signs and banners of all sorts. I helped hold a Jewish Voice for Peace banner while facing the street across from Borders on Michigan Avenue. Also across the street were what I call Jewish brownshirts with an Israeli flag and signs.

We chanted many slogans such as "Education not Occupation!" I told a Palestinian boy standing next to me that I am Jewish and oppose the group across the street. He looked at me with a questioning expression. I said Judaism was about justice and that I support the Palestinians at the vigil and the people of Gaza. He asked what the sign I was holding said. I told him it said "No dollars for the Israeli military." Later when I got tired of holding the sign, the boy held it. We made a real connection.

I believe that Jews and Palestinians should work together to stop the killing of civilians and to help create peace in Israel/Palestine. Of course, this will be very difficult.

—Long-time activist



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GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS

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YOUTH

Revolutionary Greek revolt continues

by Brown Douglas

The continuing revolt in Greece was sparked in December by the police killing of an unarmed youth. It began in an artsy, left-wing neighborhood of Athens and spread to all sectors of Greek society and throughout the country. Alexandros Grigoropoulos, a 15-year-old student whose crime was merely a verbal altercation, was murdered by a police officer.

The revolt made headlines around the world for weeks, and was almost invariably referred to as "riots." The media focus on burning cars and graffiti projected a sensationalized image to international audiences, papering over the social antagonisms and aspirations for new social relations in the revolt that continued well into January. The word they're using in Greece for the events is *exergersi*, which means "uprising" or "insurrection" and not "riot."

ROOTS OF THE REVOLT

Greek radicals refer to the almost decade of military rule during the sixties and seventies as a major reason for widespread distrust of the government and police. Lethal force by police is not accepted by any segment of the population, but that hasn't stopped rising attacks on immigrants. One example is the Pakistani man who was murdered by riot police while standing in line to seek asylum at an Athens immigration office in October.

Greece has not been immune to all of the multiple crises confronting global capitalism. Racist attacks on immigrants, youth with diminishing prospects of anything resembling a stable future, massive job cuts for workers, and widespread political corruption are all un-



One of the many demonstrations in Athens

derlying causes of the anger that exploded when Alexandros was murdered. The government's massive modernization project of the last decade has not improved the lives of most Greeks.

At the high point of the revolt, students and youth occupied thousands of learning institutions. The mainstream Greek media reported occupations in "800 high schools and 200 university departments around the country." As in the Paris revolt of 1968, a major issue is the alienation inherent in the education system. The Athens Polytechnic was the center of the revolt of Greek youth in 1973 against the then-ruling military junta, and was occupied again as a center of revolutionary activity from the time of Alexandros' murder until Dec. 24. It is just outside the Exarchia neighborhood where Alexandros was murdered.

Greek workers used the space opened up by the youth to exercise power not only against the police and the Greek state, but also against the largest trade union in the country, the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE). One commentator put it into perspective by saying that the occupation of the building of the GSEE was akin to American workers taking over the AFL-CIO. Not only did workers occupy the building, but renamed it the General Assembly of Insurgent Workers. The stirring declaration in which they justify and explain their decision to take over the GSEE can be read in full: <http://jameshorrox.wordpress.com/2008/12/17/greek-workers-occupy-union-hq/>.

As in past European revolts, the entrenched "Left" parties, like the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), aligned themselves against any revolutionary action, shamelessly condemning any radical action as "American-directed." Incredibly, some KKE members went so far as to occupy university buildings so that revolutionary elements could not implement the free and open popular assemblies that were being created all over the country! Is there still any serious radical around who does not see the complete invalidity of the myopic "party-to-lead" that has so deadened and betrayed near-revolutions for close to a century?

STUDENTS AND WORKERS UNITE

The high point of both France in 1968 and today's Greek revolt, was a new unity between student and worker revolutionaries. The youth reached out in writing to those who can shake capitalist society to its knees, the workers. Greek workers reciprocated in a letter written to the students:

"So, you've gone beyond us, as always happens in history...You've already occupied your schools and you tell us that the most important reason is that you don't like your schools. Nice. Since you've already occupied them change their role. Share your occupations with other people. Let your schools become the first buildings to house our new relations. Dividing us is their most powerful weapon. Just like you are not afraid of attacking their police stations because you are together, don't be afraid to call us to change our life all together."

To some, the most remarkable thing about the re-

volt in Greece was its simple existence. It's important to not just stand in awe of the revolt, which showed that such an event can explode at any given moment in what appears to be "stable" and "modern" Western society. Though the uprising failed to sustain itself long enough to be a full revolution, we need to learn from the amazing events in Greece. The continuing question is: How do we make a revolution, and what is needed to allow it to develop on its own ground?

Eco-socialists confront climate change

Oakland, Cal.—On Jan. 10 and 11 we attended a West Coast regional conference on "Climate Catastrophe and Social Change: an Eco-Socialist Perspective" at Laney College. The opening and closing plenaries featured Joel Kovel, a founding member of the Ecosocialist International Network and author of *The Enemy of Nature: The End of Capitalism or the End of the World*.

The many conference workshops stressed the daunting task facing humans if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change that will wipe out the population centers occupying coastal areas of the world in the next 40 years. It also stressed the rights of the underdeveloped world to a "level of welfare that is beyond basic needs but well short of today's levels of 'affluent' consumption," which can be realized only through a new level of human solidarity on a global scale. The urgency for getting the message out is that even the most heroic efforts for reducing carbon emissions may barely succeed in avoiding the threshold of stopping global warming from exceeding two degrees centigrade.

The strength of this conference was the recognition that the problem of the impending ecological catastrophe cannot be solved within the framework of capitalism. Kovel began by criticizing the back-in-fashion Keynesian economics for its drive to keep capitalistic-style growth going at all cost.

Kovel bases his eco-socialism on Marx's concept of "freely associated labor" and cites Marx's principle that the free development of each is the condition for the freedom of all. Freely associated labor, he said, is fundamentally different from Communism, which leaves out nature and merely takes over capitalism and reproduces its deleterious effects. However, Kovel claims Marx failed to grasp that nature has intrinsic value, claiming that there is still a dichotomy in Marx between labor and nature. This flies in the face of Marx's concept of humans as directly natural beings and the need to overcome alienated labor, which alienates commodity-producing humans from each other and nature.

In our own discussions with participants at the conference, we pointed out that one of the weaknesses of Kovel's presentation of the contradiction in capitalism is that he stopped at the commodity's contradictory unity of use-value and exchange-value instead of going immediately, as Marx does, to how that contradiction is merely a reflection of concrete labor and abstract labor. Abstract, alienated labor is the value-producing substance. This drives the idea that what is real is not nature and human natural capacities, but rather socially determined value.

The viability of the global capitalist system has been called into question by its own internal crisis. The issue raised at this conference—capitalism's absolute destructiveness to nature and, in turn, humanity—cannot be ignored by those struggling for a socialist alternative.

—R.K. and H.L.

Revolution needed in Israel

"Everybody is somebody's Jew. And today Palestinians are the Jews of Israelis." These are the words of the renowned Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi when he broke with Zionism after Begin-Sharon's complicity in the massacre of Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila in 1982. It was also Levi who wrote in his masterpiece *If This is a Man* that, **"In Auschwitz it was not just Man but the Idea of Man that died."**

Levi's account of the death of humanity as an absolute found philosophic expression in Theodor Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* where he poses a "New Categorical Imperative: **Never Again.**" With him the Absolute comes crashing down as it is deemed to be but the equivalent of burning human flesh in the crematoria! How could that burning Hell ever disclose a positive in the movement of the dialectics?

Thus, what's drawn from resistance within the Death Camps as well as the Ghetto uprisings is made to comply with an **"Ought."** Everyone, including Emil Fackenheim, the author of *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, was convinced that "the Absolute is incomprehensible." The "Kingdom of the Auschwitz," he wrote "is not of this world." What's left to do, then, is to perpetually resist the "Absolute." The Holocaust, he argued, emerged from a concept of totality. But when people in Bosnia march in the streets with the yellow arm bands, it should serve as a stark reminder that "Never Again" has been but a hollow call to a halfway house.

The tragedy of Israel may be summed up in the self-relinquishment of its **history** as a struggle for freedom. What's intellectually conserved, and continually recollected, and what permeates its organizational life is the long night of captivity and the experience of a "meaning-less death." No one should ever underestimate the lasting presence of the Holocaust on the mind of a people on the verge of total annihilation. And yet one is not thereby to forget its very opposite, the birth of a whole new consciousness of freedom that arose from within the death camps.

It is this idea that is in need of Recollection. Otherwise, each new generation is condemned to begin all over again as if all that has preceded is completely lost. For Israel to "resurrect" the idea of freedom, all the formative experiences of its struggle for self-determination, it must come to recognize that it has been transformed into opposite—the oppressed has become the oppressor. To save Israel from itself, and to usher in a new era in its relationship with Palestinians and **their** aspirations for self-determination, Israel must experience a new, a social revolution.

—Raha

Efren Paredes: jailed for life at 15

Efren Paredes, at the age of 15, was jailed for a crime he did not commit. Within three months of the murder of his friend and boss, the teen was sentenced to three life terms, two without parole. He's 35 now—20 years behind bars.

I have seen cases like this before, having been a secretary at the Medill School of Journalism when David Protess taught investigative journalism. Dr. Protess's classes were directed at wrongful convictions. The Ford Heights Four (1996) were shown to be innocent when his students were working their case, as was Anthony Porter (1999).

Efren Paredes's case is a classic. Start with the media circus surrounding the murder of a well-liked member of the community, a beloved family man and a good friend/supervisor. The District Attorney and prosecutor are wildly anxious to find the killer. Add a local drug dealer (and possibly a police informant) who puts forth his son as someone who will testify on condition of immunity. Add two teenagers who admit to involvement in the crime and two under-age teens who knew about the plans. Have all five of these conspirators finger a prominent very good boy who is vulnerable because of his Hispanic background (the only one in school).

Add to this array of snitches a purposely inept investigation, a little planted evidence, some rap lyrics to prejudice a jury, a couple of lies during jury selection, a lawyer who didn't have time for a real investigation, a gullible public and . . . well, you'd have to read up on the case at www.4efren.com.

Efren was never in trouble with the police before this happened. It was his first offense—except it wasn't. Efren is innocent of this crime.

In addition to his innocence, he is someone you'd like to know. I feel privileged when he asks to talk to me on the phone. I had the honor to speak at his parole hearing. He is an expert in Braille translations and works for the Michigan Braille Transcribing Fund. Efren organized a walk for breast cancer inside the walls; he advocates for other prisoners, and has prevented suicides.

If you want to help Efren, his case now awaits the Michigan Parole Board's recommendation to Governor Granholm regarding a commutation. All you need to know and instructions for helping are at the website. Any questions you would like to ask me can be forwarded from arise@newsandletters.org. And thank you for any help you may offer.

—January

WORLD VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

Hundreds of thousands of European homes went without heat, and factories were forced to close for two weeks in January, as Russia and Ukraine clashed over the oil shipped by Russia's Gazprom through Ukraine's pipelines. The crisis ended, for the moment, when Russian Prime Minister Putin and Ukraine's Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko signed a ten-year gas delivery agreement on Jan. 19.

As in the recent war in Georgia, imperial rivalries were involved. The subtext of the episode was the effort by Putin's government to put pressure on Ukraine for its intent to join NATO and the European Union. The gas crisis meant that Putin's government was willing to be seen in Europe as an unreliable gas supplier, in order to impose the same price on Ukraine.

The move did succeed in influencing the internal politics of Ukraine, pitting Tymoshenko against President Viktor Yushchenko, whom she has criticized in the past for involvement with RosUkEnergo, the middleman in the shipment of Russian gas which is half owned by Gazprom and half by Ukrainian businessmen. The company has been accused of kickbacks and corruption. The new agreement would eliminate RosUkEnergo's role and will be an issue in Ukraine's upcoming presidential election.

The ability to outmaneuver Ukraine's politicians reflects Putin's success in co-opting and marginalizing his own internal opposition. The remnants of Russia's liberal reformers of the 1990s now exist in an unprincipled anti-Putin alliance with the "red-brown" National Bolshevik Party (NBP) as part of former chess cham-

Russia-Ukraine clash

pion Garry Kasparov's "Other Russia." Meanwhile Putin's government has built upon the economic reforms, which were made at the expense of the working class, and at the same time taken on the NBP's ideologist, Aleksandr Dugin, as an important state adviser.

With falling oil prices driving economic crisis, there is new opposition rising. Thousands demonstrated in Vladivostok and other cities at the beginning of February. The dire situation of the Russian opposition today was addressed in a recent essay by poet-activist Kirill Medvedev. He describes a new turning point, in which "a task that was wholly bungled at the beginning of the '90s is once again taking center stage: the creation of a real left-wing movement, based on workers' autonomy, on independent labor unions, on the cooperation of grassroots movements and organizations."

Medvedev writes, "The real need now is for the emergence of a new stratum of leftist intellectuals who have mastered the history of leftist thought, leftist politics, leftist art of the 20th century and who have, through Western Marxism and neo-Marxism, recognized their participation in the international socialist project. This is, undoubtedly, the cultural and political goal of humanity—because it is precisely a participation in self-government on as broad a scale as possible—and not the possibility of a career, pure art, or a private life—that is the next step, without which humanity is doomed to moral and physical degeneration. The old slogan 'socialism or barbarism' has become unbelievably relevant." ("The Writer in Russia," *Dissent*, Fall 2008.)

In today's Russia, this amounts to a call for a new attitude to objectivity.

Venezuelan murders

A suspect has been arrested in the November murder of three Venezuelan union activists, but questions remain. Richard Gallardo, Luis Hernández and Carlos Requena were shot dead by a gunman on a motorbike in the city of Cagua, southwest of Caracas in Aragua state. They were leaders of the National Workers Union (UNT). Seven members of the UNT have been killed in Aragua in the last two years.

They were involved in a workers' struggle at Colombian-owned Alpina food processing company. Hundreds of workers had occupied the plant and were demanding full payment of money owed them by Alpina. There were clashes with police.

Police have since arrested Julio Cesar Agrinzones Romero, a worker at Pepsi Cola de Venezuela's plant in Villa de Cura in southern Aragua. Luis Hernández was a worker there as well. However, union officials state that Agrinzones Romero was at work the night of the killings.

Suspicion of a professional hit have been raised, in line with the more than 2,500 unionists who have been killed in Colombia in recent decades.

Some unionists in Aragua also pointed to the pro-Chávez mayor of the municipality of Zamora, Aldo Lovera, as a suspect, as Luis Hernández had run against him and demanded a recount of votes. Lovera had allegedly responded with death threats.

Gallardo, Hernández and Requena were members of the section of the UNT which opposes government control of the labor unions, the CCURA (United Autonomous Revolutionary Class Current) and the Workers Left Unity. Demands for a full investigation of their deaths have been heard around the world.

Rwanda-Congo unity

In a surprise reversal in mid-January, President Joseph Kabila's Congo government allowed up to 4,000 Rwandan troops into Congolese territory in pursuit of Rwandan Hutu militias. The Hutu militias, which took part in the genocide of up to half a million Rwandan ethnic Tutsis and dissident Hutus, were forced out of Rwanda in 1994 and have been based in eastern Congo. They have terrorized that region since then, taking control of villages, mines and businesses.

In return, the Rwandan government sponsored a Congolese Tutsi rebellion led by General Laurent Nkunda. In another surprise reversal, Nkunda was apprehended in Rwanda as part of the deal. He and his militia have been charged with massacres and other wholesale violations of human rights. Congo says it will seek extradition. Nkunda's militia underwent a recent split with part of the leadership seeking peace with Congo's government. In an unprecedented cooperation, Rwandan and Congolese forces have been fighting together in Kasinga against the Hutu militias.

The ongoing war in eastern Congo has been incredibly brutal. Over five million people have died from violence, famine and disease. Of the 45,000 who die every month, half are children under five years old. Millions have become refugees. The practices of ethnic cleansing, genocidal rape, and press-ganging child soldiers are common.

In its previous ventures into Congo the Rwandan government has been accused of exploiting eastern Congo's people and mineral wealth. But if this new agreement holds it can be a very positive development.

Latin American Notes

Mexico—A massive demonstration in Defense of the Popular Economy was held in the center of Mexico City on Jan. 25. Tens of thousands of protesters from the capital and from many of the states of Mexico streamed to the Zócalo to hear López Obrador (the Presidential candidate from 2006 who most likely won the popular vote), present a program of actions for the next two months in the face of the deteriorating economic situation faced by Mexicans.

An increasing inflation rate and a meaningless minimal rise in the minimum wage, combined with the deepening impact of the U.S. recession, have intensified the already deep economic and social inequality Mexican workers, peasants and unemployed face.

Obrador proposed a series of protest meetings in the coming months both in the capital and in the states of Mexico. These will involve demands in housing, electricity, gasoline, and retirement funds.

* * *

Bolivia—The Jan. 25 vote has finally given birth to a new Constitution, the first time Bolivian citizens have had a right to vote on their Constitution. Among its provisions:

- Recognition and a degree of autonomy for the country's 36 pre-Columbian indigenous nations and Afro-Bolivians. Article 289 in the constitution stipulates, "Rural indigenous autonomy consists of self-government and the exercise of self-determination for rural indigenous nations and native peoples who share territory, culture, history, language, and unique forms of



juridical, political, social, and economic organization." Indigenous people did not have a right to vote before the 1952 Revolution.

- Education is mandated to be free, while health insurance is supposed to be universal.
- Crucial national resources are to remain in the hands of the state. Since 2000, Bolivians have carried out massive protests against the privatization of water and gas.
- Women are guaranteed equality in work, and discrimination based on sex is prohibited. However, abortion remains illegal.
- The constitution prohibits foreign military bases in Bolivia.

The key question now is whether and how these and other important provisions will be implemented.

—Eugene Walker

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. *News & Letters* was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910–1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the National Editorial

Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907–83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject what is, but to reveal

and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her recreation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and her final 1987 Presentation on

the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and donated new supplementary volumes to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

In opposing this capitalistic, racist, sexist, heterosexist, class-ridden society, we have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead." We participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our *Constitution* states: "It is our aim...to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking. Send for a copy of the *Constitution* of News and Letters Committees.

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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WORKSHOPTALKS

Data may deny care

by Htun Lin

Barack Obama's \$800 billion stimulus package includes \$20 billion, to be followed with another \$30 billion, for computerizing health information. Analysts tout the value of hi-tech to bring quality healthcare, and point to medical groups like Kaiser HMO and Sutter Health, which have already digitized recordkeeping.

As one of the workers in that world, I know this is not the answer to providing quality care. We're drowning in technology. What's in question is its relation to actual patient care.

In reality, cost cutting, not delivering better care, is what motivates computerization. Karl Marx said labor under capitalism is split between abstract and concrete labor. For healthcare workers, computerization has intensified that opposition between abstract labor—the drive to cut costs and labor time—and concrete labor, providing quality care.

For example, recently a conscientious nurse expressed exasperation that enormous resources are expended for co-pay collections while no budget is set aside for mining data for infectious agents like TB. This task is critical to prevent further spread of disease. As a result, many patients are wrongly placed in shared rooms, where they spread TB, MRSA, and other types of communicable infections.

The computer technology fetish is further alienating the whole healthcare workplace, transforming everyone, including RNs and MDs, into appendages to the machine, feeding information to a vast database. A

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BLACK/REDVIEW

by John Alan

Sudan and oil

Editor's note: As John Alan is ill we are reprinting his column on "Sudan and oil" from July 2001, which discusses the deep roots of the tragedy of Darfur still ongoing (see p. 6).

For over 18 years a brutal civil war has been fought in Sudan between the ruling Arabic-speaking Muslims of the north and the indigenous Black Sudanese living in the south. The most recent economic reason for this conflict was the unilateral decision, of the ruling northern Sudanese government in Khartoum to sell concessions to Western and Asian oil corporations to drill for oil in Sudan.

Nature had placed Sudan's rich crude petroleum areas in southern Sudan. To validate its agreement with multinational oil corporations, the Khartoum regime sent in troops to clear and protect those areas from any opposition by southern Sudanese. According to a recent Amnesty International report, the Arabic Khartoum regime has used ground attacks, helicopter gunships and indiscriminate high-altitude bombardment to clear the local population from oil-rich areas.

This massive displacement of the local population was followed in the last decade by the deployment of additional weaponry and forces, specifically drafted to protect the oil fields. The military tactics of the government's security force destroyed harvests and looted livestock as it occupied the area to prevent the return of the displaced population. This scorched-earth policy has caused the death of more than 2 million people and has uprooted another 4.4 million, many of whom may die from famine.

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Crisis compels return to Marx

I. World in Meltdown and Revolt

The forces stirred by the swarm of crises shaking capitalism's world order to the core were manifested both inside and outside the London Summit of the G20. Tens of thousands of marchers converged on the Bank of England on April 1, in four streams led by the new Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Red horse against war; Green horse against climate chaos; Silver horse against financial crimes; and Black horse against land enclosures and borders, hailing the 360th anniversary of the English Revolution's Diggers and their designation of the Earth as "a common treasury for all." Protest signs ranged from "Jobs not bombs" to the huge banner reading, "Capitalism isn't working / Another world is possible."

Not far off, thousands of mainly young people pitched tents to create a Climate Camp across from the European Climate Exchange, a center of the scam called carbon trading, raising the banner: "Stopping carbon markets, because nature doesn't do bailouts." Yet another protest opposed the U.S. wars against Iraq and Afghanistan.

But the true depth of revolt was shown in the latest factory occupations, as hundreds of workers sat in at three auto parts factories being closed by Visteon UK in Basildon, Enfield and Belfast. One worker, John McGowan, told a reporter, "We intend to carry this camp here for as long as we possibly can, right through to next week, next month, if it takes it. There are people willing to do it, and we have organized ourselves."¹ In Greece, a 24-hour nationwide general strike on April 2, the day of the summit, showed how the masses of workers can shut down a country. Stathis Anestis, a spokesman for the Greek General Confederation of Workers, called it "Greece's response to the G20 summit in London. Those who created the crisis are now trying to fix it, and the solutions they're handing down to governments like ours are not to be trusted."²

(A) U.S. challenged by Europe and China as fears of new Depression raise specters of fascism and war

Inside the G20 summit, intended to forge united action by the world's biggest economies, U.S. President Barack Obama and his counterparts sweated to paper over their quarrels about how to take on the meltdown. The urgency of the action they wished to take is underscored by the fact that this is only the second summit of G20 heads of state. But Obama, calling it a "turning point" and begging the world to "wait and see," could not hide European countries' rejection of his top goal, to pump up their stimulus spending, nor his rejection of their demand for international financial regulation.

The rift between the U.S. and most of Europe was expressed most starkly by European Union President Mirek Topolanek's declaration the week before, that President Obama's deficit-funded stimulus program is the "road to hell."

The rifts are also within the EU. The warning by Hungary's Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany of a "new iron curtain," if the richer nations of West Europe fail

In this special issue we are publishing our Draft Perspectives Thesis, part of our preparation for the national gathering of News and Letters Committees over Memorial Day weekend. We have published every one since 1975, breaking new ground for the Marxist movement. We do it because our age is in such total crisis, facing a choice between absolute terror or absolute freedom, that a revolutionary organization can no longer allow any separation between theory and practice, philosophy and revolution, workers and intellectuals, "inside" and "outside." We ask you to join in the discussion of these Perspectives. We are not presenting any "pat answers" to the question, "Where Do We Go from Here?" We are raising the questions that demand answers—and we ask you to help us in working them out.

to aid the East, threw cold water on the 20th anniversary of the fall of Communism in East Europe.³ Now what is falling is not a wall but the illusion that the crisis of state-capitalism was limited to the East bloc. Far from solving the East's problems, turning to mixed private and state-capitalism has left those countries and even the Eastern part of wealthy Germany stuck in a legacy of poverty, pollution, and unemployment. That is deepening in today's crisis, leading observers such

as Ron Asmus of the German Marshall Fund to ask: "Is the democratic transition in danger?"

Strikes and protests have swept the region, from Montenegro to Estonia. Governments have fallen in Latvia, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The simmering discontent was expressed in January by participants in Bulgaria's "Nationwide People's Protest," who declared, "We are fed up with living in the poorest



Financial Fools Day/Fossil Fools Day—Demonstrators in London make April Fools Day their own as they march against the G20.

Girl Gone Mad, Democratic Underground

and most corrupt country."

CHINA'S CHALLENGES

In a separate challenge, China won more power in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Having exploited its most available resource, labor power, to become the world's sweatshop, China has now become the creditor of last resort. The U.S. even had to smooth over its recent confrontation with ships from the Chinese Navy, which has strengthened enough to challenge the much more powerful U.S. Navy regionally. That does not mean that China can ignore the challenge from within, as it officially admits 20 million unemployed, with tens of thousands of labor revolts every year. (See "China workers' revolt," p. 12)

The rifts between rulers are not just policy differences but have raised fears of trade war, which the G20 believe they have averted for now with their meager stopgaps.⁴ But protectionist measures have increased, and narrow nationalist demagogues are trying to exploit them, along with anti-immigrant scapegoating.

No international agreement can ward off the specter of fascism and world war, just as it cannot erase the memory of the Great Depression of the 1930s, when massive state intervention into the economy could not renew value production until World War II sowed vast destruction across the globe. A mainstream economist as rigorous as Simon Kuznets could not escape the conclusion:

"Thus, emergence of the violent Nazi regime in one of the most economically developed countries of the world raises grave questions about the institutional basis of modern economic growth—if it is susceptible to

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3. "Borderless' Europe faces test of unity," by Tom Hundley, *Chicago Tribune*, 3/18/09.

4. See "America is from Mars, Europe is from Venus," by Christian Reiermann, Michael Sauga and Thomas Schulz, *Der Spiegel*, 3/16/09.

1. BBC News television report by Mark Simpson, April 1.

2. "Greeks stage walkout tied to summit," by Anthee Carasave, *The New York Times*, 4/3/09.

After the election: where to now?

by Terry Moon

While there is no question that the election of Barack Obama is a good thing for women—reversing the heinous Global Gag Rule will save the lives of thousands of women, to give just one example—there is danger here too. When Bill Clinton was first elected, he too rescinded the Global Gag Rule and his reputation as a friend of women's reproductive rights led to the collapse of much of the movement for abortion rights. This left poor women still unable to access abortion, it left the Hyde Amendment denying federal funding for abortion intact—it is still intact—it left federal and state courts riddled with right-wing judges, and it left a fanatical right wing determined to stop women's access and right to abortion at any cost (see article below).

The disarming of the women's movement also left the door open for Clinton to savage welfare, thereby destroying a safety net for women—mostly single mothers—that had existed for decades and is now, in capitalism's deteriorating economy, sorely needed. While two years ago 15 million women in the U.S. lived in poverty and one in five older women were poor as were one in three single moms, now things are so much worse. Yet rather than growing, welfare rolls mostly remain flat and the number of those receiving assistance is at a four-year low.

ALL EGGS IN OBAMA BASKET

Obama has been ominously quiet on this subject at precisely the time he needs to commit to bringing women out of poverty. In fact the official White House website, expectmore.gov, tells us "the following actions" they are taking to "improve the performance of the [welfare]

Abortion rights battles continue

When Democrats are in power, the religious right intensifies its efforts. Anti-abortion groups have focused on changing state laws to make abortion illegal in the event of an overturn of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Several state legislatures have been voting on "Personhood Amendments," which would grant personhood to a cell or embryo at fertilization, conception, cloning, or a "functional equivalent."

"Born Alive Truth," led by Gianna Jessen, who claims to have survived a saline abortion when she was a fetus, launched television attack ads on Obama during his campaign saying he voted against a bill making it mandatory to give medical care to a fetus that had survived a late-term abortion. Obama voted against this bill because similar laws were already in place. Operation Rescue, headed by Troy Newman, led a campaign against the nomination of Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius for Attorney General because of her support of Dr. George Tiller, who runs one of only three clinics in the U.S. that perform late-term abortions. Newman demonstrated against Sebelius dressed as a cockroach, implying she was allowing clinics to operate under filthy conditions.

Operation Rescue (OR) focuses on harassing Dr. Tiller. They harass clinic staff as well as businesses involved with clinics, including those that provide medical services, cabs, hotels, and landscaping. Newman recruits Tiller's former employees and patients to give testimonies, usually consisting of their discomfort with late-term abortion. They are attempting to have Dr. Tiller's license revoked by influencing anti-abortion District Attorney Phill Kline to obtain patients' files to prove that Tiller was not reporting statutory rapes. However, the DA also tried to obtain files of adult patients. Though Kline lost an election to pro-choice DA Paul Morrison, Tiller was put on trial in March 2009. The charges had changed to 19 misdemeanor counts of illegally conducting a post-viability abortion. Tiller was pronounced not guilty of all counts.

Newman was disappointed by this verdict because he had said that "this trial is expected to have huge implications for the pro-life movement nationwide." The judge tolerated demonstrating OR members outside and even inside the courtroom. OR still has hope of destroying Tiller because he is now being tried again on 11 similar charges brought by the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts by Cheryl Sullenger, an OR member.

The religious right influences the public with its lies through the mainstream media as well as its own. The result is a youth anti-abortion movement as well as public tolerance of a war on reproductive rights that includes physical harassment. There needs to be more knowledge of the realities of abortion, including late-term abortion, such as the fact that it is usually performed for important medical reasons. It is critical to make known the deception of the religious right, which believes that it is moral to lie to achieve their goals. The causes of the religious right, including the war on reproductive rights, are tools in their attempt to create a theocratic state.

—A.H.

program": "Reassessing the program's performance measures and related targets," and "Implementing the plan to determine the rate and amount of cash assistance payments that are paid improperly and developing a plan for reducing improper payments." How is this pathetic response, or rather non-response, to women's poverty any different than what a Republican would do? Not only that, be it welfare, food stamps, or the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, one of the biggest crimes is that so many of those eligible for such programs don't know of them and suffer needlessly.

Given the history the women's movement had with Bill Clinton and that Obama has already proven himself wanting on such vitally important questions as health-care where those advocating single payer healthcare are banned from the discussion; given the anti-freedom Proposition 8 banning gay marriage in California which Obama has refused to repudiate; and given the newly emerging need for welfare—what is disturbing is how many women and women's groups are depending on him to solve our problems for us. From the National Organization for Women to the Feminist Majority, and from NARAL Pro-Choice America to Planned Parenthood, all have great expectations for Obama, and many have their guard down.

NEED FOR TOTAL CHANGE

While the election of Obama and the Democratic majority in Congress was a victory, it was not the deep, lasting, and total change needed for us to be free. It was that desire for a total change that made the election victory possible in the first place. The real question the election poses, then, is not our expectations of Obama, but rather, where do we—that is the women's movement for freedom—go from here?

What the election did give us was a breathing space as we move away from the stench that was Bush and his administration, and work out how to put forward what is actually necessary to transform our capitalist, racist, sexist, homophobic society into a truly new human one. Obama's admitted philosophy is pragmatism, he's going to do "what works." But the philosophy of pragmatism cannot be the movement's ground because pragmatism does not lead to the new, but to only surviving or minimally improving what is. In our age of total crisis, that is not enough. The times call for a total change. For that we need to be grounded in a philosophy of liberation.

One way to begin that work is to return to Marx. While the women's movement has, rightly, been suspicious of a post-Marx Marxism that told us our freedom always has to wait, our Draft for Perspectives poses the question, how to return to Marx's Marxism, rather than post-Marx Marxism that has betrayed women at every revolutionary turn. The women's movement has, rightly, already rejected those so-called Marxists that thunder "Social Revolution comes first." But with capitalism failing in a spectacular and horribly destructive manner, with those wanting a new world and believing that one is possible taking a second look at Marx, the women's movement can't afford to be left behind. Our pages are open for your discussion.

Review of Christian pop culture in 'Rapture Ready'

Christian pop culture is a recent phenomenon, most of the producers and consumers of which are white, conservative evangelicals. Daniel Radosh, author of *Rapture Ready! Adventures in the Parallel Universe of Christian Pop Culture*, is a Jewish Humanist. He partly wrote this book for its entertainment value because there is something inherently funny about Bibleman the fundamentalist superhero, Hell House the alternative to Halloween haunted houses, a breath mint called "Testamints," and the Christian versions of wrestling and hard rock.

The book and the companion website, www.getraptureready.com, do have their disturbing moments since, even on Bibleman's TV show for children, right-wing politics and bigotry are sometimes mixed into the message; and Radosh thought the book was important because of the profound effect of every kind of pop culture on U.S. society. He includes topics such as creationism taught by museums that depict dinosaurs romping with humans, and the merchandise and books promoting abstinence, as well as the sex manuals letting married people know what kind of sex is acceptable which often contradict each other. He describes books of fiction such as the *Left Behind* series, which instruct Christians to accept the religious right's interpretation of the *Book of Revelation* as being a prophecy of an upcoming battle between "good" (the religious right) and "evil" (everyone else).

During Radosh's investigations, he discovers a growing progressive element, as there have always been some evangelicals who are sincere about the positive message within Christianity of loving and serving others. He also becomes friends with liberal evangelicals like Jay Bakker, the son of Jim and Tammy Faye, who is the minister of a progressive, gay-friendly church.

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey



Nearly 600 people joined the One Law for All anti-racist rally in London, March 7, against Sharia and religious-based laws in Britain and elsewhere, and in defense of citizenship and universal rights. The marchers heard speakers denounce the policy of appeasement of the political Islamic movement. Hundreds then attended a public meeting to discuss and debate Sharia, sexual apartheid and women's Rights. For more information contact www.onelawforall.org.uk.

—Information from Maryam Namazie

* * *

Virginia's Democratic Governor Tim Kaine signed legislation March 30 enabling the sale of "Choose Life" license plates in the state, with \$15 of the \$25 fee funding so-called "crisis pregnancy centers" whose reason for being is to deny women their right to abortion. NARAL Pro-Choice America criticized the action saying: "the revenue would go to many centers that use deceptive, intimidating and emotionally manipulative tricks to block women from learning facts about, or choosing legal abortion."

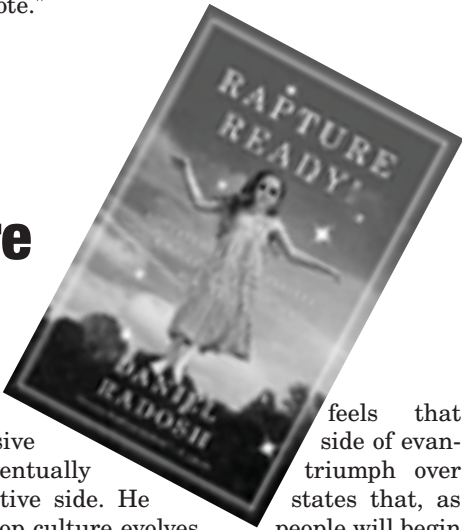
—Information from Feminist Daily News Wire

* * *

A Spanish feminist coalition, the State Network of Feminist Organizations, challenged the Catholic Church by launching a campaign, March 27, to support the liberalization of abortion laws by Spain's Socialist government. Since assuming power in 2004, the government has removed religion from the public curriculum, reformed divorce laws and legalized gay marriage.

* * *

Placard-waving women from South Africa's three Cape provinces marched to Parliament in Cape Town, March 26, denouncing the country's "slow and unbalanced" land redistribution program. They said if they were not given greater access to land, they would not vote in the country's April general elections. "We want what belongs to us," said Maria Pietersen. "We are fighting for land for the sake of our children's future, so no land, no vote."



Radosh feels that the progressive side of evangelism will eventually triumph over the conservative side. He states that, as evangelical pop culture evolves, people will begin to demand higher quality products in the performing arts, and that creative people tend to be open-minded. He feels this open mindedness will be enhanced if evangelical pop culture escapes from its "alternate universe bubble" and becomes more influenced by mainstream culture and that then its fundamentalist component will "wither and die naturally." He believes that progressive evangelicals "are probably the only people who can bring about the demise of the religious right."

I think Radosh is correct. The progressive element within evangelical religion can redefine their religion and tell fundamentalists that they are morally wrong within a religious context. However, fundamentalism is such a strong tendency within every religion, philosophy, and political movement, that it can never be completely destroyed. Also, when Radosh says progressive evangelicals are the only ones who can defeat the religious right, he does not seem aware of the magnitude and influence of its ever-growing political machine. I think that it will take firmly committed players from all walks of life to destroy the religious right because it has become so firmly entrenched in all of our society.

People who are concerned about what's going on in the world of the religious right might enjoy this book due to Radosh's humorous, respectful approach, and his outsider's look into the fundamentalist mindset, as he celebrates the emergence of progressive evangelicals.

—Adele

Stella D'Oro strike against takebacks

New York—Stella D'Oro, an Italian biscuit company, was started as a family business in 1932. The workers were unionized in the 1950s by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco & Grain Millers' Union, Local 50. Stella D'Oro was sold three times. The present owners are Brynwood Partners, which provoked a strike when they called for a 25% wage cut and increased health premiums, and ended pay for holidays, vacations and sick days, no extra pay for Saturdays and reduced pensions. The owners claimed they were losing money, but refused to open their books.

Workers organized a picket last Aug. 13, expecting a short strike. As the economy worsened, the owners found it easy to hire scabs and the strike has dragged on for seven months. The strikers remained united and called for a boycott of Stella D'Oro products. The union has called on the NLRB to rule on Brynwood's refusal to negotiate in good faith. Meanwhile the strikers are surviving on unemployment compensation.

Community activists have organized a support committee which has weekly meetings to discuss leafleting in front of stores, press conferences, rallies and raising money. Unions such as the PSC, UFT, SEIU, and the TWU are supporting the strike.

Companies are using the economic crisis as an opportunity to break unions. The New York City Central Labor Council must increase their support of the strikers and mobilize its membership to participate in the picket, rallies and boycott. Any bailout that leaves labor out will only lengthen and worsen the economic crisis.

New York—Close to 200 people came to a benefit in support of striking Stella D'Oro workers—Una Fiesta en Apoyo de los Huelgistas del Stella D'Oro. After a



Stella D'Oro workers in NY march for rights

medley of labor songs, in English and Spanish, sung by the New York Labor Chorus, and a solidarity message from a French CGT union member, two strikers spoke:

Mike Filippo: We started with 135 families on strike, but thanks to our supporters we are now 300 or more. We have received support from all over the U.S., Latin America, and Europe. Brynwood Partners, the new bosses, wanted to slash 25% of our earnings, take \$1.00 per hour for five years for healthcare; they wanted to take our sick days, half our holidays, and more. We decided to fight to the end and become an example for workers everywhere—*¡Sí se puede!*

Sarah Rodriguez: Thanks to our Support Committee, which helps us every day. I have met so many people who encourage us to keep fighting for our rights. I am learning so much from this strike—the first I have been through—and I feel like you are part of my family.

Judy Gonzales, of the Support Committee, told us that not one worker has crossed the picket line. "It takes a city to support a strike. There is a lot more to be done—we need your ideas, money, and help." Visit www.stelladorostrike2008.com; or call: (917) 497-4231.

Fighting racism at Commercial Forged

Chicago—My name is Charles R. Gilyard, President of Local 2154, United Steelworkers—the last steel-worker local in the city with full-time employees. Commercial Forged Products has approximately 60 union members. They filed approximately 150 grievances over the past three years, compared to 80 from the 11 other companies in the local.

Mr. Tobious, former Plant Manager, made a hangman's noose and held it up to Mr. Dortch, our shop griever for over nine years, in the lunchroom, stating, "This is what I used to do when I lived in Mississippi." While the company gave Mr. Dortch a letter of apology and so did Mr. Tobious, Tobious was never to my knowledge disciplined for this despicable racist act.

Mr. Dortch was terminated in January 2008. While he was out on the first termination the company terminated him a second time. There is still no date set for his arbitration, yet he is still standing strong. Pedro Benavides, the union Unit Chairman, was unjustly terminated in February 2008. Dortch and Benavides held the members together through previous contract negotiations and the company didn't want that solidarity. Mr. Benavides' arbitration was stalled until April 16.

This Feb. 9, Apolinar Quiroz, who filled Benavides' vacant union position, was given a suspension pending termination. He was reinstated one week later but the intimidation factor was present. The one white union representative has never received one write-up.

DURING OUR CONTRACT negotiations in September 2008, Mr. Schriener, Vice President and General Manager, proposed removing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday as a holiday, stating Blacks were no longer the majority in the shop. He also proposed removing the civil rights committee. All of the employees were angry at this, our Latino and white brothers as well.

Negotiations came to an impasse with only two of the company's 48 proposals remaining on the table. One was to allow the arbitrator to decide the amount of back pay awarded to a reinstated employee, rather than being made whole for all lost time. The second company proposal was to limit the Local Union President's leave to one term in office, whether re-elected or not.

WE WENT ON STRIKE over this language. It lasted two weeks, given what the economy was like in November and that it takes four to six weeks before the strike fund would kick in. Since the strike ended, members have been harassed and intimidated.

Mr. Schriener told me that I am not an employee and that if I continue to be the President of the Local I will no longer work there. The opening question of the contract negotiation was, "Am I still an employee at Commercial Forged Products? The only reason you want me back is to terminate me as you have done previous union officials." Mr. Schriener had no response.

I wrote a letter to our President, Leo Gerard, United Steelworkers, and to the President of Change to Win, Anna Burger, asking that they come together under one federation. We have union members suffering, losing jobs, homes, healthcare, because we are fighting for workers' rights and civil rights. I suggest all unions come together at Commercial Forged to show the world that our solidarity transcends our differences.

An injustice to one is an injustice to all, it should not matter what union you are in. We need all of the unions to stand together with us at our Civil Rights and Workers Rights march at 5757 W. 65th Street on April 17 at 11:00 am. I am currently working with Jobs With Justice and News and Letters to put the march together.

Workers tossed aside in auto bailout

Detroit—While the Obama administration has given GM 60 days to come up with a corporate viability plan, and 30 days for Chrysler including a merger deal with Italian Fiat, it is clear that this is a sham dance to bankruptcy for both. GM is on life support even with a \$13.4 billion loan from the government and is requesting \$16.6 billion more for starters. While the sums for Chrysler are lower, it is in the same disastrous shape.

GM CEO Rick Wagoner was forced to resign, and was replaced by Fritz Henderson, who worked for GM for 20 years, most recently under Wagoner. The only difference between them is that Wagoner publicly resisted taking GM into bankruptcy, whereas Henderson is quite willing to do so. Otherwise, it is like replacing Tweedledum with Tweedledee. Actually, Henderson had no choice since Washington has decided that bankruptcy is the only way out for both GM and Chrysler.

THE QUESTION OF bankruptcy for GM and Chrysler has been floated for months, mostly by Republicans salivating over the prospect of dealing the UAW a lethal blow through bankruptcy that could terminate the union contract. This blow to the UAW would further cripple an already weakened union movement. Nor is the chorus for bankruptcy limited to the Republicans. A growing number of Democrats are joining in—including top economic advisers to the Obama administration. These are the most qualified prizefighters for capital.

UAW leaders have already negotiated huge concessions, despite growing opposition from rank-and-file workers. At last count, there were some 782,000 autoworkers, compared with 1,286,000 in 2000, a decline of 504,000—with 176,000 jobs lost last year alone. Just like the projections for the unemployed nationally, the layoffs in auto will continue into the next year.

Meanwhile, the crisis is spreading to the auto supplier industry, which is also requesting billions in loans from the government to keep afloat. Several Chrysler plants in Canada closed recently due to parts shortages—these shortages will also continue to escalate

MANY AUTOWORKERS are angry at the administration for what they feel is preferential treatment toward the banking industry. Autoworkers in an assembly plant in Warren, a suburb of Detroit, used razor blades to scrape Obama stickers off their cars.

As for the criticism from many in Congress, one autoworker said, "Those people in Congress don't know what they're talking about when they say we're being paid too much. Just have them come here in the auto plant and do my job for just one day. They'd change their tune real quick."

—Andy Phillips

Correa betrays labor

Ecuador's Rafael Correa government employs phrases such as "citizens' revolution" and "socialism for the 21st century." However, contradictions are being exposed as it confronts organized labor. Ecuador's government budget depends to an unhealthy degree upon royalties from the exploitation of petroleum. Correa sees gold and copper mining as a future added source of government revenue. "We are a poor country," he has said, "we cannot afford not to exploit our natural resources."

The situation has come to a head with the passage of a new Mining Law that would permit Canadian multinational corporations to begin large-scale metal mining in environmentally sensitive areas. A week of demonstrations, marches and road blockages culminated in January with a day of nationwide protest organized by Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) that drew over 10,000 participants.

The government responded with police repression that is reminiscent of previous rightist governments. To add insult to injury, Correa has characterized the protests as infantile and irrational and has accused the leadership of joining with the Right to destabilize the government. These are the very movements that paved the way for his ascension to the presidency.

In January the United Labor Front (FUT), Ecuador's largest labor federation, announced mass protests for a higher minimum wage increase. They said that Correa's proposed increase of \$18 a month, to \$218, fails to meet provisions in the new constitution ensuring that all Ecuadorians are paid a living wage. Correa's response was to threaten to fire workers who participated in demonstrations during the work day.

Although the Correa government has achieved some important reforms in taxation and social services, its philosophy of depending upon selling the nation's natural resources for financing its "revolution" is no different than the neo-liberalism that has kept Latin American masses in poverty and misery.

In Ecuador, the Correa government will continue making concessions to the Right and to corporate capitalism. However, with a government that calls itself socialist but fails to directly confront capital, the forces from below are once again regrouping for a future confrontation for the eventual destruction of capitalist economic relations and the achievement of a new society based upon human values.

—Participant/observer, Ecuador

WORKSHOPTALKS

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retiring nurse told me that computerization had nothing to do with the company's claim of improving care delivery, but was meant to keep track of their bottom line.

The computers are there not only to track our daily performance but also to mete out punishment based on statistical data. Evaluation is no longer "personal," but automatic and faceless. Even shop stewards feel they cannot argue with data given an "objective" aura by the computer, even though statistical facts reflect priorities, like revenue enhancement, programmed into the computer by management. In a disciplinary hearing often the manager and the shop steward sit on the same side opposite the employee who is advised by both on how to improve their performance.

For over a decade, our HMO has been automated as possible. What they cannot escape is the fact that only living labor can provide the fundamental face-to-face human interaction that is the essence of healthcare.

As computers reached into all areas of the workplace, not only do we hear less from our union officials, but we workers have stopped communicating with each other in the ways we had before. Everyone is so worried about their own time-study ledgers, and concerned about "making the cut" and "career advancement," that our natural cooperation has been usurped towards enhancing the company's bottom line. The computer overlord isolates us from one another. Acting human has become time consuming and not cost-effective.

Many nurses are forced to neglect patients due to excessive focus on paperwork, and the obsession with their own time-study stats. The most significant, persistent neglect is institutionalized through efficiency methods such as floor managers practicing chronic short-staffing. Computers dictate to RNs and MDs alike what is the acceptable level of care to be offered to patients according to parameters of abstract labor, that is, labor time. A whole army of utilization reviewers, on and off site, is constantly looking, literally and virtually, over the shoulders of RNs and MDs to limit care so as to control cost. Concrete labor is thus confined within the limits dictated by abstract labor.

Obama's nationwide program to computerize the healthcare workplace will only intensify our conflicted work life. There is no other resolution to the current crisis except workers controlling their work free of the dictates of capital. The question of the hour that many are asking is "Can capitalism be saved?" But the real question many of us worker/thinkers, both employed and unemployed, want to ask is: Should capitalism be saved, and what is the alternative?

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: This is one of a series of Political-Philosophic Letters written by Raya Dunayevskaya during and after the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Translated into Farsi and distributed by Iranian revolutionaries, Part I appears here and Part II will appear in the June-July News & Letters. Both parts are on newsandletters.org. The series was published in a pamphlet, *Iran: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, and is available in the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, #7219, along with the Farsi edition, #7266.

What has happened to the Iranian revolution? Has it already run its course into its opposite, counter-revolution? Or can it be saved and deepened?

June 25, 1981

Dear Friends:

The removal of President Bani-Sadr, first from his post as Commander-in-Chief, and, within 12 short days, on June 22, from his post as President, accompanied in both cases by armed gangs shouting: "Death to Bani-Sadr! Death to the Second Shah!" has brought the counter-revolutionary elements to such dominance that one must ask: Have the contradictions in the Iranian Revolution that were present from the start reached a counter-revolutionary climax? What, indeed, has happened to the Iranian Revolution that was so massive, so courageous, so persistent in the long preparatory strikes that became a General Mass Political Strike and drove the Shah from power? Could the revolution have lasted no more than one and a half years? Is its bent to devour its own children—and in so insensitive a manner also its poets as to have arrested Saeed Soltanpour as he was being wed and shortly thereafter to have executed him—to go unimpeded? Even Stalin didn't act that rapidly and that deadly against the Russian poets. Has the revolution already run its whole course, straight into its opposite, counter-revolution?

Let's not rush to final judgment. The decisive question has not yet been answered: **What about the masses who achieved that great dual revolution against their own ruler and his foreign backer, U.S. imperialism which had put him in power and kept him there for a whole quarter of a century?** Had the 1917 revolutionaries written off the Russian Revolution in August, the counter-revolutionary Month of Great Slander, there would have been no November Revolution.¹ Let us first examine the objective and subjective situation more closely, not for any scholastic purposes, but to see whether there is a way to stave off the full thrust of the ongoing counter-revolution, and thus return to the 1979 revolution and its goals as well as its mass participation.

I. The Fall of Bani-Sadr under the whip of Khomeini and his Counter-Revolutionary Islamic Republic Party

It is, of course, no small matter that, 17 short months after Bani-Sadr was elected as the first president ever of Iran by no less than 75% of the population, he has been driven from office by Khomeini, whom Bani-Sadr had given shelter in Paris when the Ayatollah had been expelled from Iraq. After a **very** brief playing with the democratic nationalist intellectuals, by naming Bani-Sadr to be Commander-in-Chief, Khomeini raced to the most narrow theocratic, monopolistic, one-party state, with One Man Rule—his own, as he had always planned. The goons who call themselves Hezbollah (Partisans of God), vigilante-like carrying out all orders of the IRP (Islamic Republic Party), immediately surrounded the offices of the President, shouting for his death, while chanting (as they indiscriminately wielded their weapons of terror): "The only leader is Ruhollah! The only party is the Party of God!" Having rhymed the Ayatollah Khomeini's name with no less than God himself, they believe they can, unburdened by any responsibilities, proceed to create havoc in an already chaotic state of the economy—40% fall in production, 40% rise in unemployment, runaway inflation, the Kurdish insurgency, and labor and peasant unrest.

NOR IS IT ONLY A SMALL TRUTH that the demonstration for Bani-Sadr, the opposition to his ouster, the Left's wish to deepen the revolution, was attacked by an IRP-ordered demonstration, headed

On the 30th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution

Revolution and counter-revolution

by the so-called "Revolutionary Guards" who did not limit themselves to wielding knives but proceeded to shoot indiscriminately. Forty lay dead; hundreds were wounded; and just over the weekend alone 40 others were executed for supporting Bani-Sadr. Without any shame whatever, the hanging judge, Khalkhali, was shouting: "We will show them we are men of war and will dig their graves in the streets." The true martyrs, however, were the Mujahadeen, who were certainly more active and for a longer period of time in the revolutionary preparation against the Shah than was the late-comer, Beheshti, the Chief Justice, and many of his cohorts who were accusing Bani-Sadr of being "a second Shah."

Bani-Sadr isn't any "second Shah"; Khomeini is. And so is the IRP, waiting for the 81-year-old Ayatollah to die so that its leadership can take his place and complete the counter-revolution.

From the very day that Bani-Sadr had been democratically, overwhelmingly elected, the IRP began plotting to make the post of President powerless by turning to their clandestine mosque activity as well as their open work now that they already had plenty of power, to make sure that the next election—for the parliament—was

one they would win. This was followed up by many other usurpations of power to which we'll turn directly after we examine what it is that Bani-Sadr did after he received that overwhelming vote of mass confidence. Did he follow through with the mass activities, be it for democ-

racy, for workers' control of production, for extending the shoras [revolutionary councils]? Did he elicit from them how they wished to concretize, that is, to maintain power in their own hands? Did he pay attention to the innumerable publications and Left groups—all sorts of independent Marxists, Marxist-Humanists, the Tudeh, the Trotskyists? What, exactly, did he do for the Women's Liberation Movement that he supposedly favored?² What about the intense discussions and activity of deepening the revolution—not merely against the 52 second-level hostages in the American Embassy, but the genuine anti-imperialists and anti-native capitalists?

THEREIN—AND NOT IN WHAT both the bourgeois, Communist and Trotskyist press now talk about: failure to build "a party structure"—lies the beginning of the end of the petty bourgeois, revolutionary intellectual, who does want more democracy, more freedom, but who has no total philosophy of liberation. Bani-Sadr couldn't have taken **organizational responsibility** for a philosophy of liberation he did not have. He, himself, was both bourgeois and totally committed to Ayatollah Khomeini. Thus, though Bani-Sadr didn't think the taking of U.S. hostages (which after all was engineered by the "followers of the Imam" advised by the IRP) was the way to fight U.S. imperialism, he bowed to what had been done behind his back, and most deliberately with a view to **appear** more militant, more Left, more anti-U.S.A. than he. Thus, while he did nothing to encourage the new decentralized forms of self-rule of the masses, the IRP did everything to build up its single-party rule. Thus he even followed Khomeini and the IRP as they moved full blast against the revolutionary elements in the University, especially its bookstalls of Marxist literature.

The IRP, on the other hand, never stopped moving in a most reactionary way to what they called "pure" Islam, as witness the most barbaric, strait-jacket type of law, the "Vengeance Act."³ Allegedly it is rooted in the *Koran*. It most assuredly is not accepted by any Arab nation or Sunni believers or, for that matter, strictly Persian Shi'ites. The act metes out punishment for all "crimes," sexual as well as political, with but two **male** witnesses needed to testify. Executions follow immediately. No wonder that the hanging judge Khalkhali was so highly rated by "the Party" that he was even permitted to indulge in the goriest of all spectacles—bringing the corpses of the U.S. soldiers from the desert where President Carter had sent them to die, for a public display.

What never stopped was the plotting about the institutionalization of what Khomeini and the IRP called the Islamic Republic, supposedly modeled on the 1906

Constitution that had emerged during the Iranian Revolution which had driven out their first Shah, established a Parliament, and written a Constitution. The present Constitution, however, not only bore no resemblance to the original Constitution, but established the so-called Office of the Religious Guide; more accurately it should have been called office of the Emperor, who not only, like Louis XIV in feudal times, had defined "*L'état, c'est moi*," but also claims a direct line to God. Thus, witness how Khomeini vetoes everything and anything he disagrees with, even those measures his own mullahs may have voted for, or didn't want, as they didn't want Bani-Sadr named Commander-in-Chief.

Those mullahs weren't innocents—**there are no innocents among rulers, with or without Khomeini**. They never gave up the intrigue to usurp all new institutions, beginning with the "Revolutionary Council" and control over the militant students who had been carefully educated in Iran with great hostility to the revolutionary students who had been educated abroad, and were "tainted by the West." What they actually meant was not "the West" but Marxism, which is not taught in any U.S. university and which the students learned independently.

The fifth institutionalization was the street gangs, as a vigilante order unto themselves. With the parliamentary majority in place, with the closing of all the newspapers from Bani-Sadr's to the Tudeh's *Mardom* and the Mujahadeen's *Mujahid*, the neo-fascistic party was ready to move against Bani-Sadr.

The 40 or more who were executed in a single weekend were but the beginning of the blood-letting. But can we say that there it will end? The Left against whom all the blood-letting is perpetrated will not limit its revolutionary energy to showing its critical support for Bani-Sadr. Not only is illegal work every bit as critical as open opposition, but what is needed most of all, what is imperative to work out now, what has heretofore been disregarded though it is absolutely irreplaceable, is a philosophy of revolution, a philosophy of total liberation.

As I pointed out at the start of this Letter, had the Russian revolutionaries given up in August 1917; had they turned away not only from the counter-revolution but had an attitude of "a plague on both your houses" to the reformists as well; had they not used the period for working out fully *State and Revolution* as the ground for a new revolution, there would have been no November 1917. It is true that no Lenin is visible on the Iranian horizon. But the **ideas** of revolution and liberation, as well as the masses who fought for them, are there. Let us see what can be done to transform the present reality.

(To be concluded next issue.)

Notes

- See my Political Philosophic Letter, Dec. 17, 1979, "What is Philosophy? What is Revolution?" which had concentrated on the *April Theses*, pointing to the fact that it was the concept of *State and Revolution* which was the ground on which Lenin reorganized the party, preparing for social revolution. What is important here, however, is the timing, between the first draft as "Marxism and the State" which was written before April, and the final draft which was written after the Month of Slander, which forced Lenin to flee to Finland. It was that final version, *State and Revolution*, which was circulated to an actual revolutionary group, and hewed out the path to November. See especially N.N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution*, 1917.
- See the Spring 1980 pamphlet, *Iranian Women, The Struggle Since the Revolution*, published by the Iranian Women's Liberation Group in London, which quotes a TV-radio interview with Bani-Sadr from which it is clear that he not only didn't disagree with a Muslim reactionary, mythical view on women now passing for "science"—"Men's level of sexual urges and needs are much higher than women's and this is because of certain sex hormones in man's body, whereas there are no sex hormones in woman's body"—but saw that his alternative group should set up its own paper, *The Muslim Woman*, that was edited and run mainly by men.
- See "Iran's Gluttonous Revolution," by Flora Lewis, *The New York Times*, June 15, 1981.

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Depth of crisis compels return to the Marxism of Marx

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such a barbaric deformation as a result of transient difficulties."

(B) Disarray in thought reflects capitalism's structural crisis

The disarray in bourgeois thought reflects the rulers' desperation. Ever the pragmatist, Obama is determined to try something, despite the gulf between the size of the problem and the proposed solutions. Hence the sigh of relief that the summit reached an agreement, though it did not include his desired Keynesian super-spending. Even a prizefighter for capitalism like bourgeois economist Paul Samuelson found himself quoting Joseph Schumpeter's statement during the depths of world war in 1942: "Can capitalism survive? No. I do not think it can."

What the clashes on how to address the economic meltdown reflect above all is that there is no fix: capitalism's contradictions cannot be solved as long as we live under capitalism, but capitalism is precisely what the world powers are trying to save.

Even stepping up capitalist globalization through the "Doha Round" of trade talks was included in the summit's communique—but the same globalization was instrumental in the unprecedented speed of the collapse's global spread, and its steep descent. Each forecast is worse than the last, with the 30-nation Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) now warning that world trade is in "free fall," expected to decline by 13.2% in 2009, and reporting, "This contraction of world trade is broad-based, and affects all regions and is the worst since comparable data exist." It projected its member economies would contract 4.3% this year, predicting the first negative global economic growth since World War II, and a sharp rise in unemployment.

Neither trade liberalization, nor fiscal stimulus, nor financial regulation, nor funding the IMF can change the fact that the rate of profit has declined below what capitalists consider necessary to keep investing in expanded production. In fact, much of the trillions being poured out of the central banks and treasuries ended up paying for marketing, underwriting of mergers, patches for balance sheets, lobbyist fees, bonuses and luxury parties and golden parachutes for executives—everywhere **but** investment in production.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN CAPITALISM

What capitalism has never fully recovered from is the deep structural change manifested in the global economic crisis of the mid-1970s. At the time, few Marxists were ready to agree with Raya Dunayevskaya's analysis of this structural change based on the rate of profit's decline. In retrospect, even bourgeois economists admit that the "booms" since then look more like bubbles now, combined with a restructuring which they prefer not to name plainly: the additional profits squeezed out of the world's working classes through a class war attacking wages, benefits, working and living conditions and unions—a class war of which globalization is an integral part that pits workers of all countries against each other in a race to the bottom.

Some radical economists who rejected Dunayevskaya's analysis then, are now stating that the rate of profit has never recovered, as if they had come up with it all by themselves. But at the time she had to confront Marxist epigones like Ernest Mandel who, dazzled by capitalism's ability so far to avoid another Great Depression, were awed by its "stabilizers" and saw only a recession that was already ending in 1975.⁵

Despite the widespread recognition that the totalitarian Communism—that is, state-capitalism—of Stalin's Russia or Mao's China is neither a solution to crises nor a model for the new society, and despite the calls for a humanist and not statist socialism for the 21st century, the illusion still abounds that capital can be controlled by nationalization and other forms of state planning and intervention, and that statification is the road to "socialism."

WORKERS' REVOLT VS. ALIENATED LABOR

This disarray in thought on the Left as well as among the rulers and their intellectual representatives proves the need for a total uprooting of this society in order to make new beginnings—and, to do so, the need to be rooted in Dunayevskaya's analysis of the crises of state-capitalism. We cannot chart a path to freedom based on state vs. private property. But we must break with the perversity of capitalist relations spelled out as "dead labor dominating living labor," the machine as master of the human being, "which gives rise to the fetishistic appearance of commodities and presents the relations between men as if they were mere exchange of things." It is that basic alienation of labor that must be overthrown, and that cannot be done by the state or

from the top down, but must be accomplished *through* the self-activity of masses in motion.

Nor can we allow thought to be separated from workers' revolt. Proletarian revolution is needed to put an end to capitalism's ongoing destruction of the bases of human civilization, and at the same time, "the totality of the contradictions compels a total philosophic outlook. Today's dialectics is not just philosophy, but dialectics of liberation, of self-emancipation by all forces of revolution—proletariat, Black, women, youth. The beginning and end of all revolves around labor."

Whether or not they acknowledge it, too many "Marxists" today have no confidence in the ability of masses of workers to remake society, whether that is expressed as the need to limit the movement to pragmatic piecemeal goals, to provide a blueprint to the masses, or to form a vanguard party to lead them. But where some on the Left lack confidence, the rulers are worried about what will surge up from below. The worldwide revolt of labor—as well as rulers' often-expressed fear of the revolt—is another index of the crisis.

(C) Two worlds in every country

(1) The challenge from labor in 'developing' and 'developed' lands

From the UN Secretary-General to the head of the IMF to the Prime Minister of Qatar speaking at the Arab League summit, warnings of unrest to come have been pouring out. In Obama's White House, the economic crisis is the subject of a daily secret briefing since global instability (that is, revolt) from the meltdown is considered a bigger strategic threat than al Qaeda. The really fundamental rift is not one between heads of state, but the rift within each country, the struggle between two worlds of the rulers and the ruled.

Revolt, especially by labor, has been heating up worldwide. France and its overseas colonies showed what could be in store. A general strike brought the



Collective Against Super-Exploitation demonstration in Point-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, on Jan. 30, 2009, as part of the island's General Strike.

Caribbean island of Guadeloupe to a standstill from Jan. 20 to March 5, lasting over six weeks. Workers by the thousands held demonstrations, built roadblocks, clashed with police, and surrounded a police station to secure the release of 50 arrested strikers. By March the French government, which rules the island, had granted the top 20 demands of the labor-community coalition LKP (Collective Against Super-Exploitation), including a substantial wage hike for the lowest-paid. Unemployment there was 22.7% as of 2007, with poverty 12.5%, yet prices are higher than in France.

Unrest spread to other islands ruled by France: neighboring Martinique, which also went on general strike; and Réunion, an island east of Africa, where 30,000 protested, listing 62 demands. Ivan Hoareau, a union leader there, said, "We will lean on the victory in the Antilles to satisfy the biggest number of our grievances. If we continue here, it is to help our buddies in the Antilles."⁶

Shortly after Guadeloupe's workers walked, mainland France saw a general strike, with well over one million protesters in the streets of 200 towns on Jan. 29, opposing President Sarkozy's economic policies. A larger number marched March 19 in another general strike. French workers have also pioneered the technique of "bossnapping," penning bosses into their offices until workers' demands are met. Bosses at Sony, 3M, Michelin, Caterpillar and RBS have experienced it, usually finding the demands not so unreasonable after all.⁷

(2) Back to the U.S.: Racism, homelessness, prison, homophobia on the one hand, strikes and discontent on the other

Suffering, and revolt, will certainly continue to

build. Far from the world food crisis being a thing of the past, the world's chronically hungry people now exceed one billion, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. And let us not think for one minute that hunger only stalks overseas, as hunger, homelessness, and poverty are making a big comeback in the U.S. Real unemployment (including "discouraged" workers and involuntary part-timers) is almost up to 16%, while another 2.3 million people are behind bars; some of them work, but for only pennies an hour.

Despite the draconian conditions in which prisoners are confined, there is a ferment of discontent and ideas behind the walls and bars. Many are denouncing the nature and function of the prison-industrial complex, which they recognize as an integral part of the mechanism keeping the working class down as well as supplying an ever-growing source of cheap labor to pit against "free" workers on the outside.

While the situation of Black America has worsened with the crisis, depression conditions have existed in the inner cities for many years. As reported in the March 16 *Christian Science Monitor*, the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University indicates that:

- While the number of men (all races and ethnicities) looking for full-time work has nearly doubled in the last year, employment fell much faster for Black men than for Asians, Latinos, and whites;
- "The employment rate among African-American men aged 20-24 is now just 51%, as opposed to 68% during the late 1990s. For African-American teens, it's just 14%."
- From November 2007 to February 2009, "there was no net job loss among professionals or managers.... All the job loss has been among blue-collar jobs—construction, manufacturing, and retail," where Black men have traditionally found employment.

As well as suffering higher imprisonment, unemployment and poverty, Blacks lost homes through foreclosures at a higher rate than other groups—partly due to being targeted for subprime loans, even when eligible for more affordable loans.

The sharp increase in homelessness visible everywhere has sparked new initiatives of homeless people squatting in some of the many homes made vacant by the irrationality of a system in which people exist to serve the production process rather than the other way around. It has also meant new tent cities, such as Seattle's Nickelsville, named after the mayor who is trying to drive the homeless out of Seattle. Formerly homeless activist Anitra Freeman said:

"People have been dying on the street for twenty years. The homeless women's group that I work with stands a vigil, women in black, whenever somebody homeless dies outside or by violence in King County. We started in 2000, and we've stood vigil

for 330 people since then. Eleven just this year. This has been going on for a long time, and it is getting worse."⁸

WORKERS, IMMIGRANTS, GAYS STRUGGLE FOR NEW HUMAN RELATIONS

Voices like this express a Reason not likely to heed for long Obama's calls for "patience" for his "recovery and reinvestment" plan to bring relief and even "a secure and lasting prosperity." Nor has labor been quiescent, from a 14-week strike against Vought Aircraft Industries in Nashville, Tenn., to a seven-week strike at Dover Chemical in Ohio, and from a protest by temps against pay cuts at Microsoft to vocal discontent from autoworkers facing Obama's drive to bankrupt GM to force union concessions (see "Workers tossed aside in auto bailout," p. 3). In all this, the successful factory occupation by workers at Republic Windows and Doors has not been forgotten, and shows not only a method of struggle but a link to revolts in Latin America and a challenge to the sanctity of private property.

The upcoming May Day demonstrations, reclaiming U.S. labor's revolutionary history and highlighting the struggles of immigrants, will be a test for labor. Let us not forget that Obama could not have won office without the votes of white workers, and though virulent racism is still widespread, it does mean that unity of white, Black and Latino workers is on the agenda, not just to elect someone to manage capitalism but to abolish it and to begin the reconstruction of society on new, human foundations.

At the same time, Obama's election coincided with California's Proposition 8, which aimed at relegating Gays to second-class citizenship by outlawing same-sex marriage. This anti-human drive has continued in many states, and the protests that broke out immediately after the election, by Gay and straight alike, continue, revealing how serious the masses are about "change" being not just political, but a change in human

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5. See *Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crises* (News and Letters, 1978). Its essay "Today's Epigones Who Try to Truncate Marx's Capital" is to be included in a forthcoming collection of Dunayevskaya's writings on Marx—see Part III of this draft thesis, pp. 6-8.

6. "Paris fails to end island protests, seen spreading," by Estelle Shirbon, Reuters, 2/13/09.

7. "Angry French workers turn to 'Bossnapping' to solve their problems," timesonline.co.uk, 4/3/09.

8. "A 21st Century Hooverville," *Democracy Now*, 3/30/09.

Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2009-2010

continued from p. 5
relations. (See "No half-way opposition to DOMA!" p. 8.) Even a legal victory as sweeping as the Iowa Supreme Court's legalization of same-sex marriage will not still these voices.

Among these multiple profound contradictions, it is not only Marx's analysis of capitalist crisis that needs to be recovered. What he developed was a philosophy of revolution that encompassed all the dimensions of human liberation. And today the world faces many crises—economic, political, ecological—that were not even on the G20 agenda, from the war in Afghanistan to the continued threat from nuclear weapons, from genocide in Darfur to ongoing social battles in Latin America.



Workers at Republic Windows and Doors celebrate factory sit-in.

II. Political-military crises from Afghanistan to Sudan

What refuses to be put on the back burner behind the economic crisis is war—or, rather, war grows out of the same soil of a decaying capitalist system that has long since outlived its usefulness to humanity. Obama, formerly the anti-war candidate but today holding the reins of commander-in-chief, now projects keeping troops in Iraq until the end of 2011. Even then their withdrawal is no certainty.

(A) Obama's Afghanistan-Pakistan surge, with a possible Taliban deal in the wings

In Afghanistan Obama is adding 21,000 troops, comparable to the size of Bush's "surge" in Iraq. Although these wars were off the G20 agenda, Obama's trip to Europe also took him to NATO's 60th anniversary meetings and a summit with the EU, at both of which he twisted arms just to get 5,000 more non-combat European troops sent to Afghanistan. Near the NATO summit in Strasbourg, France, a peace camp was the base for vigorous protests against the Afghan war and against NATO's imperialist role.

Obama has also stepped up bombings in Pakistan, despite fears it will destabilize the country and strengthen the Islamist insurgency within. One result of the U.S. escalation in Pakistan and Afghanistan is the decision of competing Taliban factions in the two countries to unite to fight the U.S.

That will not stop either the U.S., Afghan or Pakistani government from cutting a deal with the Taliban. To the contrary, the Pakistani government already has discussions under way with the Taliban leadership, and plans to develop them into more formal talks with U.S. support. While the language used is that talks will proceed with the "moderate" Taliban, the reality is they want to negotiate with Muhammad Omar and the murderous Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Hezbi-Islami, which was directly involved in some of the most horrendous crimes against women. That includes throwing acid in unveiled women's faces, as well as, according to the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), the murder of their founder, Meena. He is also notorious for slaughtering those who are not of his Pashtun ethnic group.

The latest retrograde deal is in Pakistan's Swat Valley, where the Taliban have been murdering intellectuals, secular politicians and women leaders, burning schools and terrorizing the population of 1.3 million, who just a year ago voted overwhelmingly for the secular Awami National Party. Now, the Pakistani government has allowed the imposition of Islamic law in the Swat Valley, suspending the army's drive to crush the Taliban, thereby turning it into a Taliban sanctuary. The nature of that "compromise" can now be seen on the internet in a horrifying video of a 17-year-old girl there, held down by three masked men and flogged

brutally in public, reportedly for the "crime" of refusing to marry a Taliban commander.

(B) All sides sell out women

That the U.S. is seriously considering negotiating with such creatures shows that, to the rulers, it's all about fighting al Qaeda. It's not about building democracy and certainly not about women's liberation—in fact all sides from the Pakistani government to the U.S. are willing to sell out women. If any more proof were needed, there is the new law passed in Afghanistan with President Hamid Karzai's support—until international outcry supposedly forced him to reconsider. The law legalizes rape within marriage and forbids women to leave their homes, seek work, get an education, or visit a doctor without their husband's permission.

It isn't only that women's struggle for freedom is a human rights and justice issue. Rather, women's fight for liberation is a crucial dimension of the dialectics of revolution. That was seen most clearly during the Iranian Revolution on International Women's Day, March 8, 1979, when thousands of women took to the streets in protest of Khomeini's order for women to wear the veil. While that was the impetus that brought them into the streets to chant, "At the dawn of freedom, we have no freedom," their marches, which continued for five straight days, criticized the unfinished nature of the revolution and pointed to the counter-revolution within the revolution. It pointed to how the revolution could continue and reveals even today how deep and total revolution must become if it is to uproot the present system.⁹

(C) Extremes of capitalist barbarism: nuclear weapons and genocide

But U.S. actions in the region are not determined by freedom, except insofar as it is seen as a threat to strategic interests. The same is true of other powers trying to intervene, from Iran to Russia. Both are challenging the U.S., which has been weakened by imperial misadventures and economic collapse. Having effectively partitioned Georgia, Russia has used its muscle in Central Asia to pressure tiny Kyrgyzstan into shutting down the U.S. military base there that has been vital to supplying U.S. forces in Afghanistan. At the same time, the CSTO—a military grouping of seven former USSR republics, led by Russia and including all but one of the Central Asian countries north of Afghanistan—announced the activation of its own "rapid reaction force."

Perhaps more crucial is the fact that Pakistan is a nuclear-armed country that borders another nuclear-armed country, India, with which it has had three wars. Nothing better shows that the threat of nuclear war did not disappear with the USSR. In addition to the eight nuclear-armed countries, neither Iran nor North Korea shows signs of shifting direction from the nuclear-weapons road—with the possibility of their actually using them or serving as magnets for U.S. or Israeli attacks.

The most telling measure of what is left off the agenda of all Obama's meetings on his European trip is Darfur. The U.S. angles for a direct military presence in Africa via its new military command called Africom aimed at maintaining access to crucial resources like oil and providing a base for geopolitical maneuvers. (See Black/Red View, "Sudan and oil," p. 1.)

III. The needed return to Marx is through the re-creation of his Humanism as Marxist-Humanism

The tragedy of Darfur demonstrates the fatal trap of Obama's mantra of "patience," which allows a million human lives to remain at risk while his new administration "debates" what to do. Another chapter of the crisis began March 4, when the International Criminal Court in the Hague charged Sudan's president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, with seven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from the slaughter of 300,000 people in Darfur. It was the first time a sitting head of state has been indicted by the tribunal. When Bashir then expelled 13 NGOs (including Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam and CARE) for "spying for the Court," it left over a million people without adequate food, clean water and healthcare as a meningitis outbreak threatened. Obama's feeble response to the ongoing horrors, offered in a meeting with the United Nations secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, was that it was important to send a strong message "that it is not acceptable to put that many people's lives at risk." At the same time came the shocking report that none less

9. See "Iran: Unfoldment of, and Contradictions in, Revolution," by Raya Dunayevskaya, in *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East* (News and Letters, 2003).

than Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, along with a number of Arab League state leaders, dared to defend Bashir at the Arab League summit in Doha, and call for the indictment instead of President Bush and Israeli leaders, in light of U.S.-Israeli actions in Gaza. As if we have to choose one war criminal or another to support! Meanwhile, the horrors of Darfur continue unabated.

What is clearly needed to respond to such deadly and myriad global crises as those we are facing at this moment is far from a "debate," that is, a war of words, but a battle of ideas to grasp the deep uprooting demanded to get rid of capitalism and all the crises it gives birth to. That battle of ideas involves realizing—that is, making real—that it is not a question only of destroying the old, but also of creating the new.

This is what distinguishes the struggles and discussions ongoing in Latin America. In countries like El Salvador, Ecuador, Venezuela and Bolivia (see "Latin American Notes," p. 12, and "Correa betrays labor," p. 3), that has meant a move to the left and actual battles over how to reorganize society, while across Latin America it has meant a serious battle and ferment of ideas. In Mexico the Spanish translation of Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution* has just been reprinted, and her *Marxism and Freedom* is being used in high school classes and activist study groups.

In Venezuela and Bolivia the talk by leaders of a "socialism for the 21st century" reflects the pressure from below. It reflects mass rejection of capitalism and the desire for a humanist socialism that doesn't settle for varieties of state-capitalism trying to pass itself off as socialism, whether social democracy of the welfare state or totalitarian Communism. Yet the actual events raise crucial questions: Can workers' self-management be legislated or imposed from above? Can socialism co-exist with a President who declares war on workers who strike against state-owned enterprises?¹⁰ What constitutes socialism? These battles of ideas are not about abstractions but about real **revolution** and how to get a direction to a new society.

THE NEEDED RETURN TO MARX, BUT WHAT KIND OF RETURN?

If it has not been clear, ever since Obama was elected on a groundswell for "change," his trip to Europe and the Middle East removed any doubt that his "new" ideas and efforts are all about saving capitalism. At the same time, there have been significant calls to return to Marx not only from the Left but from bourgeois economists as well. There are reports of substantial

10. See "The words of President Chavez are a declaration of war against the workers, says Orlando Chirino," <http://www.laclase.info/nacionales/las-palabras-del-presidente-chavez-son-una-declaracion-de-guerra-contra-los-trabajadores>

continued on p. 7

War is reality

In January, Israeli Air Force missiles destroyed a convoy of Iranian arms in Sudan. The arms were bound for Hamas in Gaza. This incident (which destroyed 17 trucks, and killed 39 people, according to reports) shows just how close to the brink of a larger war the region is.

It was a disturbing coda to the Israeli war on Gaza, which was in progress at the time, and a measure as well of just how seriously the war of words between the Iranian and Israeli governments should be taken. With the ascent of the right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel the possibility of an explosion becomes even more serious.

It should be noted that in return for its cooperation with Iran, the Sudanese regime receives international support in regard to its genocide of the people of Darfur, which has killed hundreds of thousands of Black Sudanese Muslims. A delegation representing the Iranian government and its regional clients in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza recently travelled to Khartoum to express their support for leader Omar al-Bashir after an arrest warrant was issued for him by the International Criminal Court.

There is a parallel situation in Pakistan, where the U.S. has only increased its attacks upon Taliban personnel with Predator missiles. These strikes are carried out on Pakistani soil, and at the same time, the Taliban has stepped up its attacks against convoys carrying supplies bound for U.S. troops in Afghanistan. With the ceding of vast areas of the Northwest Frontier Provinces to the Taliban by Pakistan and the U.S. troop surge in Afghanistan, elements are in place for a larger war.

But in both these situations, it would be difficult to argue that war hasn't already begun.

—Gerry Emmett

Depth of crisis compels return to the Marxism of Marx

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new sales of *Capital* in Germany. And bourgeois and academic economists are re-discussing constant and variable capital, value and surplus value, and declining rate of profit. Yet it all ends with a narrowing of Marx to no more than a radical economist. The call for a "revolutionary change" is reduced to an abstraction, when what is needed to confront the questions of pathways to revolution and what happens after revolution, is a return to the fullness of **Marx's** Marxism, the philosophy he identified as a "new Humanism" to distinguish it from "vulgar communism," in his 1844 Economic Philosophic Manuscripts. Those Manuscripts were, at one and the same time, a profound critique of the Hegelian dialectic and a recovery of the Hegelian "negation of the negation" as the turning point for all forward movement.

These 1844 Manuscripts constituted what the founder of Marxist-Humanism, Raya Dunayevskaya, identified as "**the philosophic moment**" in the development of Marx's Marxism. In her presentation dated June 1, 1987,¹¹ Dunayevskaya clarifies it as the specific point when Marx "articulates the great merit of Hegel in discovering the 'negation of the negation' and the great demerit of this same Hegel in enveloping it in such mysticism by dealing with it as various stages of consciousness, rather than as men and women thinking." It is where, she continued, Marx "declares himself not only against capitalism and 'vulgar communism,' but proclaims his philosophy to be 'a new Humanism.'"

In our age of absolutes—of state-capitalist totalitarianism and humanity's quest for full freedom against it—Dunayevskaya, in attempting to follow through on Marx's roots in Hegel, picked up on where the 1844 Manuscripts were going, in two letters written on May 12 and May 20, 1953, that became the philosophic moment for all that followed in the development of Marxist-Humanism. It was in those 1953 Letters that her own breakthrough on Hegel's "Absolute" succeeded in "demystifying it as either God or the closed ontology," to see it as "the unity of both the movement from practice that is a form of theory and the movement from theory that is itself a form of philosophy and revolution." **This** philosophic moment is what governed all the concretizations that followed for Marxist-Humanism.

Those concretizations included the founding of a **new kind of organization**, News and Letters Committees, determined to take responsibility for the idea of Marxism for our age, with a **Constitution** that was grounded in Marx's concept of the unity of theory and practice; and a journal, *News & Letters*, established directly in that Constitution, that would make sure the

11. Though her death prevented this presentation from being delivered, it stands as the crucial final writing of her full body of Marxist-Humanist ideas. See *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism*, pp. 3-12.

voices from below would be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of revolution. The philosophic moment governed, as well, the continued development of that philosophy through the three books that constituted a "**trilogy of revolution**," each incorporated directly into the Constitution as they reached publication: *Marxism and Freedom* in 1958, *Philosophy and Revolution* in 1973, and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* in 1983.

The objective moment we are living today—when the continued existence of capitalism is being questioned by theoreticians and workers alike—underscores the urgency of our work on publishing a book collecting some of Dunayevskaya's writings on Marx that have not previously achieved a wide circulation. As part of the process of working that out, News and Letters Committees organized a series of classes in all our Locals this year on "Confronting Today's Crises: The Marxist-Humanist Return to Marx and the Revolutionary Abolition of Capitalism." In this series of discussions, we aimed to catch the methodology of Dunayevskaya's return to Marx and to discover how to uproot the old society by creating the new. We projected Marxist-Humanism as a vital contribution for today's freedom struggles, one that is not only a return to Marx's Humanism but its re-creation for a new age of state-capitalism, an age of counter-revolution coming from within revolution and of its opposite, the reach for total freedom. As a way of working out the book, the classes focused on moments of development of Marxist-Humanism, from the original philosophic moment, through each of the trilogy of revolution, to the work on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy—including how each moment meant also a new view of Marx that was only possible due to the re-creation of his philosophy.

CONFRONTING TODAY'S CRISES THROUGH THE TRILOGY OF REVOLUTION

How Dunayevskaya's 1953 philosophic moment proved to be the determinant for establishing continuity with Marx's 1844 Humanism can be seen in how it was concretized in each of the trilogy, beginning with *Marxism and Freedom*. In the context of the world stage of state-capitalism ushering in a new stage of production with Automation, and a new stage of cognition, *Marxism and Freedom* restored the philosophic foundation of Marxism in Humanism and the Hegelian dialectic, and spoke to the way our age with its total crises compels a total outlook. Our classes highlighted the original contribution Dunayevskaya made in making explicit how Marx responded to the dialectic in the movement from practice—including the workers' struggle for the eight-hour day—and in thought, by restructuring *Capital* and in the process breaking with the old concept of theory. In the context of today's situation, this was also seen in the way *Marxism and Freedom* takes up *Capital*, Volume III as it analyzed economic

crisis, which Marx refused to separate from the perverse relations of dead labor dominating living labor, or from its opposite: "human power which is its own end."

Responding to the failure of the 1960s movements, and especially of the attempt to "pick up theory *en route*," *Philosophy and Revolution* showed the dialectic of the movement from theory and its relationship to the movement from practice. Our classes focused on its central category of Absolute Negativity as New Beginning. Not just a point of departure for studying Marx and Hegel, it is an original contribution to Marxism that is needed for this age to reach freedom.

As Marx's last writings became available, the Women's Liberation Movement arose and crises wracked the globe from the mid-1970s structural economic crisis to the counter-revolution coming from within the Iranian Revolution. *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* developed the category of post-Marx Marxism as pejorative and, with it, Marx's "new moments," proving why a successful revolution required the **whole** of Marx, every moment of which spells out the need for revolution in permanence. Our classes asked what is a viable basis for socialism for the 21st century that would not repeat the historical failures of post-Marx Marxism.

TOWARD THE DIALECTICS OF ORGANIZATION AND PHILOSOPHY

In the last years of her life, confronting how the changed world of the 1980s had polluted the thought of the Left, the founder of Marxist-Humanism began an intensive study to work out the question of "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" that all of her developments had led her to confront as the "burning question" that remained an "untrodden path" by all except Marx.

The very last presentation she wrote on June 1, 1987, drew urgent attention to one of the last writings of Marx, his *Critique of the Gotha Program*, wherein, for the first time, "no matter how Marx kept from trying to give any blueprints for the future," he developed "a general view of where we are headed for...the day **after** we have rid ourselves of the birthmarks of capitalism, **when** a new generation can finally see all its potentiality put an end once and for all to the division between mental and manual labor."

As Marx had written it in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*: "...after labor, from a mere means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual...only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banner, from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Yet post-Marx Marxists had failed to make that the ground for organization.

Our classes took up some of the many aspects of the work Dunayevskaya did toward Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy, beginning with how the June 1, 1987, presentation made a category of the philosophic moment as determinant, and thus gave a new vantage point for grasping the whole body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism. Inherent in the 1953 philosophic moment was the need for revolutionary organization to be animated by Marx's philosophy of revolution in permanence, to prepare for what happens after revolution in an age when even successful ones got pushed back or turned into opposite.

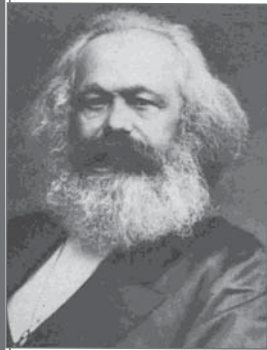
THE PATH TO THE POSITIVE IN THE NEGATIVE

The collection of writings which we have begun to organize has revealed the complex pathway that it took to reach the leap in cognition that the philosophic moment of 1953 represents. The first significant point on that pathway was the creation of the **theory** of state-capitalism, without which Dunayevskaya said the **philosophy** of Marxist-Humanism could not have been developed. It underlines the difference between theory and philosophy, in the way theory can be seen as what addresses the needed uprooting of the old, but philosophy is demanded for the creation of the new. Indeed, finding the positive in the negative—the negation of the negation—was the key task of philosophy to Hegel, to Marx, and to Dunayevskaya, as the turning point to all forward movement.

Another crucial part of the complex pathway to the full development of Marxist-Humanism was what could be called "living the revolution"¹² with the movement from below: the miners' strikes and Black struggles right in the midst of World War II; women as revolutionary Reason throughout history; and, after World War II, her crucial participation in the 1949-50 Coal Miners' General Strike against Automation—all at the same time that she was digging into Marx and his roots in Hegel. Most crucial of all in that activity was the question she heard the miners posing about "what kind of labor" humanity should do? Why should there be a division between mental and manual labor? The significance of that experience was incorporated

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12. Adrienne Rich's designation for Dunayevskaya's body of work. Rich, "Living the Revolution," *Women's Review of Books* (3:12), September 1986.



"To understand today we must begin at the beginning, that is to say, as always, with Marx. Specifically the two periods are: the first and the last, the first being *the* philosophic moment, 1844. That laid the ground for all future development. The last being the long hard *trek and process* of development—all the Revolutions, as well as philosophic-political-economic concretizations, culminating in *Capital*. Yet the full organizational expression of all came only then, i.e., the last decade, especially Marx's 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Program*. Why only then?"

**—Raya Dunayevskaya from
*The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism***

Read Dunayevskaya's exploration of Karl Marx's "philosophic moment"—his 1844 Humanist Essays, which she saw as "a determinant, even if the person who was driven to articulate the Idea of that 'moment' was very nearly unconscious as to its depth

and its ramifications...." Experience the philosophic moment of Marxist-Humanism, Dunayevskaya's breakthrough on Hegel's Absolutes: "The Idea is in demystifying the Absolute as either God or the closed ontology, as the unity I singled out, a dual movement, from theory to practice, from practice as well as from theory."

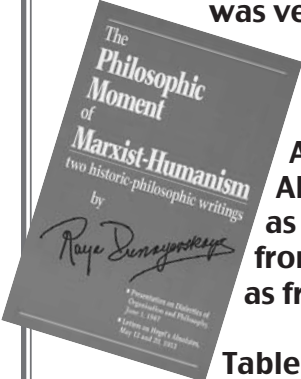


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Special Offer - Hardcover copy of *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* plus one year's subscription to *News & Letters*, only \$12.00 (a \$15 value). See lit ad on page 12 for order information

Depth of crisis compels return to Marx

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directly into our Constitution.¹³ Because the May 1953 philosophic moment caught what was in the air after Stalin's death, it anticipated the revolts in Eastern Europe, which did not begin until the following month, and which answered affirmatively the question: "Can humanity be free in this age of totalitarianism?"

Grasping the methodology by which Marxist-Humanism was developed as the needed philosophy of revolution for our age, in order to pursue it all the way to the new society, is what has put the development of the book we are undertaking as one of our primary tasks for the year ahead.

IV. Marxist-Humanist tasks for 2009-2010

1. Foremost among our tasks this year is our aim to complete a collection of *Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on Marx*, from the 1940s to the 1980s. It will demonstrate the totality of Marx's Marxism through the lens of Marxist-Humanism's continuity with it, and make explicit a methodology for today's revolutionaries to confront new objective-subjective developments.

2. We also plan to again make available in print the collection of *Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on the Middle East*, from the 1960s to the 1980s, first published in a pamphlet by News and Letters Committees in 2003. As we pointed out there, they introduced readers to "the limitations of the Nasser model of Arab national revolutions, the origins of Ba'athism, the transformation of Israel into a right-wing imperialist state, the carnage of the Lebanese Civil War, the contradictions of the Iranian revolution, chief among them the repression of a vibrant women's liberation movement by Khomeini and his leftist allies."

"While these texts contain some of Dunayevskaya's best political writings," we added, "their content is by no means limited to the political sphere only. Her 1979 essay 'What is Philosophy? What is Revolution?' emphasizes the need to transcend the merely political analysis into a philosophic encounter with the dialectics of revolution." This issue of *News & Letters* carries part of one of the essays from this pamphlet on page 4.

We published them, we wrote, "not to supply answers" about the Iraq war Bush had launched, or the motivations behind it, but to contribute to a re-creation of the idea of social revolution on the part of the activist-theoreticians of a new generation. As we enter the

13. See *A 1980s View: The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949–50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya (News and Letters, 1984).

Praising young voices

Chowchilla, Cal.—It's been a while since young Black Americans had the opportunity to speak out in regards to real issues. I applaud you for the article, "Youth speak on crisis in Oakland" in the Dec. 2008-Jan. 2009 *News & Letters*! I've found over the years that we as African-Americans and as a society as a whole no longer teach, guide, or encourage our children. We don't instill in them that they are beautiful, and that they are worthy.

We no longer take pride in our neighborhoods, churches, or schools. Our struggle, in overcoming any and every obstacle placed before us since the Atlantic Slave Trade began in 1493, has been almost silenced. We have lost some things that once were dear to us. We are no longer waiting to overcome, as in "we shall overcome."

Instead, we glamorized drug dealers, selling drugs and using our own children as mules. We have created a genocide in our communities giving our children low self-esteem, dysfunction, and no education.

So I would like to reiterate that we are majestic, strong, worthy, we have fought a good fight up to this point. We should really understand that "we have overcome" a lot. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream is now becoming a reality. And all those before us who spoke out and marched did make a difference.

However, the new realities have negative connotations. "Hood" and anything associated with the term is nothing to be proud of anymore. Where respect soared you used the term "neighbor."

Our thinking has enslaved us on a daily basis. We offer each other nothing. Our babies are making babies, not understanding that the revision of the welfare system cuts off all aid after five years. Our young fathers are multiplying their seeds. They are unemployed from a lack of education, intimidated by the thought of higher education and no longer consider morals and values.

So as we hear the young voices committed to a cause, I want to include them in this historic fight. I am certain that the Barbara Jordans, Alice Walkers, John Johnsons and the daughters of our new commander-in-chief remember that part of our History remains in Oakland. Thank you.

—Black woman prisoner who fought for a long time and is still fighting

seventh year of Bush's—now Obama's—war, the meaning of Dunayevskaya's writings on the Middle East has grown enormously.

3. Never was a Marxist-Humanist journal like *News & Letters* more needed, in which the voices from below of workers, women, youth, LGBT people and minorities are heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. Our determination to continue this unique paper came to the fore this year in confronting two very different challenges. One was an attempt to stop our publication, which was defeated with the help of our readers and supporters. The other is the continuing impact of the internet, which has led to the demise of a number of print publications. We are determined to maintain *News & Letters* both as a website and as a print publication, the importance of which is attested to by workers like those at Republic Windows and Doors, who took it inside their occupied factory to share with fellow strikers; and by the discussion it arouses at anti-war protests and open forums alike. It is most of all attested to by the many prisoners who, thanks to the generosity of others, are subscribers who share each issue with their fellow inmates. While that alone increases the number of revolutionaries who are "subscribers" in that sense, there is a great need for us to focus special attention this year on increasing our paid subscriptions.

4. From our beginnings we have been sustained by the support we have received from our friends and subscribers as well as by the commitment of our members, who together give life to our Sustaining Fund every year. It is why we see Revolutionary Finances as not about "money"—important as it is to pay the rent, the postage, and the printing bills—but about human relationships.

5. We plan to mark the 2010 centenary of the birth of Raya Dunayevskaya with forums and publications drawing attention to her Marxist-Humanist body of ideas as indispensable for forging the missing link between philosophy and revolution.

6. The most urgent of our tasks this year is the culmination of all our work, in theory and practice, in projection and development of new relationships, as **membership growth** to help in carrying out our tasks on the pathway to revolution and the establishment of a new, truly human world.

At the forefront of our minds is that:
"Only live human beings can re-create the revolutionary dialectic forever anew. And these live human beings must do so in theory as well as in practice. It is not a question only of meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the Idea, and of deepening theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of 'revolution in permanence.'"¹⁴

—The Resident Editorial Board

14. Rosa Luxemburg, *Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, p. 195.

BLACK/REDVIEW

continued from p. 1

There is a long list of multinational oil corporations now holding oil drilling concessions in Sudan. Among the major ones we find the Great Nile Petroleum and Oil Corporation (GNPOC) with a concession to drill for oil in two areas. GNPOC's main partner is the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), owned by the People's Republic of China. The CNPC owns a 40% share in this project. Other major shareholders are the Malaysian state-owned Petronas, which has a 30% stake in Canada's Talisman Energy, and Sudapet, the national petroleum company of Sudan, which has a 5% stake.

The above is only a small list of corporations now benefiting from drilling for oil in Sudan. More information about their interlocking shareholdings and the selling of their stock on Wall Street can be found in Amnesty International On-Line Report (June 23, 2001).

It is also public knowledge that Khartoum's take from oil concessions is \$500 million annually. This will climb steeply, once the oil corporations have recovered their risk. This will undoubtedly tip the war in the favor of the Khartoum government. It has given that government the ability to garrison the main roads and the oil fields armed to the teeth with tanks and helicopters to fight the People's Liberation Army in Southern Sudan.

Another appalling thing about Sudan's war, is its racist dimension. This can't be ignored. On one side is Arab authoritarian power and on the other side are sub-Saharan African masses fighting for freedom.

Eric Reeves, in an article for the June issue of *The Nation*, put this race division on the table when he wrote: "The National Islamic Front looks to the Islamic and Arabic world for culture and racial identity. Moreover its view of the Nilotic and Equatorian

Death of John Karnie

At 2 p.m., Jan. 9 of this year, in the central hallway at the Wallace Pack State Prison near Navasota, Texas, John Karnei, CPO USN (Ret), TDCJ number 787551, ACLU member number 67586255, collapsed and died of apparent heart failure.

Karnei, approximate age 65, had been incarcerated at the Pack prison for about 12 years on a plea-bargained 25-year sentence. He was a minimum-custody, state-approved trusty with an unremarkable disciplinary record. His medical records showed no history of cardiovascular problems.

Healthcare for most Texas state prisoners is provided by the employees of the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), whose workers operate a rudimentary clinic and infirmary at the Pack prison. The main entrance to this clinic is on the central hallway about 100 feet from where Karnei collapsed and died. Following the Jan. 5 incident, many questions have arisen concerning Karnei's death. Most of these questions remain unanswered.

Karnei collapsed and died in view of dozens of prisoners and guards, yet no one asked the clinic to send a crash cart. Karnei collapsed at a point directly across the central hallway from the office of the Building Lieutenant where Lt. Steven Martinez was on duty. The clinic, only 100 feet away, failed to send aid until after Karnei had succumbed.

The usual and customary first aid procedures were not administered. No one did anything to restore regular cardiac rhythm or respiration. No ambu bag. No CPR. No oxygen. No lidocaine. No defibrillation. No attempt to restore regular heartbeat. No attempt to restore regular respiration. Guards gathered near his lifeless body and shouted, "Get up! Get up!" Such is the warm and compassionate demeanor of guards in Texas state prisons.

Karnei was left on the floor of the central hallway until he was beyond help. Clinic staff finally arrived with a gurney, loaded on Karnei's body, and carried him away.

—Texas prisoner

NEWS&LETTERS

WORKSHOPTALKS

Acting humane and cost-effective

Israeli war on Gaza shows need for a total uprooting

by Raya Dunayevskaya

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Sudan, oil and racism

peoples of the south is animated by a vicious racism. The most common term of designation in Arabic is ABID, which translates almost exactly as 'n—r.' Such attitudes do much to explain why Khartoum has actively abetted a modern slave trade, directed against racially 'African' people of the South."

The above depiction of Arabs in Sudan as racist in no way means that Arabs are inherently racist, but, like the racist European, they become racist in the process of exploitation of African labor and natural resources. What Sudan tells us today is that the inherent drive of capitalism to accumulate an infinite amount of capital, if left unchecked, can lead to genocide. In other words, racism is a manifestation of the utter subordination and the alienation of labor in the process of capital accumulation.

Sudan also tells us, as Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in 1973, "that political independence does not mean economic dependence has ended, but on the contrary, the ugly head of neo-imperialism then first appears. Yet equally crucial were the new divisions that arose between the leaders and the led once national independence was achieved. At the same time new divisions also arose between Arab leadership and the 'uneducated masses.' Whether we look at Zanzibar, which did succeed in overthrowing its Arab rulers, or to the southern Sudan, which had not, the need remained the same: a second revolution."

Today, oil and more oil is the "ugly head" of neo-imperialism. To get new sources of oil animates a large part of the planning and the politics of the George W. Bush administration. Overcoming that retrogression is the task for revolutionaries in this country as we confront our own unfinished revolution and new forms of exploitation and racism.

WHY A RETURN TO MARX?



It was good to read on the front page of the December-January issue of *N&L* about the classes you were inviting readers to participate in on "Confronting Today's Crises: The Marxist-Humanist Return to Marx and the Revolutionary Abolition of Capitalism." I've been rereading some of the material from earlier classes and am looking forward to participating in the study of Raya Dunayevskaya's ideas regarding the inseparability of philosophy and revolution. I have to take this class on—i.e., move to deepen my comprehension of the totality of Marxist-Humanism—not only for my own conscious development, but also to contend with my hardcore Afrikacentric Brethren, who steadfastly argue that Marx is no longer relevant. I've never agreed with that position, but my disagreement was only at a visceral level. Now, having come to a position of being able to examine Marx for myself, I've learned that Marx is quite relevant. It's a tragic mistake to summarily reject Marx because he has been deemed supposedly a "racist" and think you can build socialism without having studied Marxism in totality. Surely that path would merely continue the previous failed revolutions.

Prisoner
Pelican Bay, California

OBAMA AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The interview of John Alan by Mel Vapour reflected my own thoughts on our new president. If there is going to be a change in how government works, it is up to the voters who put him in office to hold their legislators accountable. It makes no sense to cut \$40 million from a school package and yet throw millions out to states who run meaningless and fund-draining programs in prisons that can be attended for much less by men and women in the communities. It makes no sense to "bail out the banks" when men and women are being kicked out of their homes by the same banks that are taking their tax dollars in bailout plans that do not take the average person into account except with lip service. As John Alan noted, it isn't and can't be about one man, it has to be about a movement that is sustained regardless of that one man.

Robert Taliaferro
Wisconsin

At the March 19 anti-AIG demonstration in San Francisco, one woman, dressed in neat business attire and laughing, was carrying a sandwich-board sign saying "I am shocked, SHOCKED to learn that three decades of corporate malfeasance and poor oversight has fo-

IN MEMORIAM FOR ERIC LEDELL SMITH

It was with great sorrow that we learned of the sudden death last year of Eric Ledell Smith in Harrisburg, where he had served as an associate historian at the State Museum of Pennsylvania. An expert in Black History, and the author of numerous books on African Americans in the Arts, he was working at the time of his death on a biography of Countee Cullen, a Black poet associated with the Harlem Renaissance. Those in News and Letters Committees will remember him best as the young student at Michigan State University who found a copy of *N&L* at a campus "Black student house," sought us out in Detroit, and in 1971 became the Youth Representative to the National Editorial Board. It was the point when Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution* was being completed, and he participated in the vigorous discussions with her on it, within and without the Committees. When, in 1970, a consciousness of language had led many Women's Liberationist activists to ask us to change our motto "The root of mankind is man," we

READERS' VIEWS

mented an angry mob." I thought she caught some of the spirit of the march. There were about 200 participants, blue and white collar together, very noisy, very angry, full of ridicule and contempt for the corporate confidence game.

Observer
San Francisco

The Black/Red interview with John Alan was the best realistic look at Obama and the American political process in any publication in the U.S. "The prime duty of a U.S. president is to protect and preserve U.S. capitalism." That is the name of the game. Obama's unpublished script calls for him to be a Lula II. But borrowing trillions more dollars with no intention of paying it back is not an act of capitalism; it is a political act of survival and self-preservation, which ultimately puts the creditors in the driver's seat. Obama is simply following, more or less, the George W. Bush economic/political road map, and everyone knows how and where that ended up.

R. Zani
Texas

It was just disclosed that the Office of Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) did not follow proper procedures in 97% of a sample of cases in the Enhanced Enforcement Program. This simply means that rules are ignored and death or injury can result. We know of cases in the NLRB dating back to the early 1990s that were never processed. What we seldom hear about is what happens after such negligent, if not criminal, actions. We hear nothing about the suffering of the workers and their families or the restitution they are entitled to. This is certainly part of the legacy of the Bush administration. The question is: will the Obama administration correct such flagrant violations?

Former Coal Miner
Detroit

I read that when Obama met in March in the White House with the CEOs of the most powerful financial institutions in the world, they kept offering explanations for paying high salaries to their employees, and by extension, to themselves. It was reported that Obama warned them the public wasn't buying their explanations. Then he stopped the discussion by reminding them bluntly, "My administration is the only thing between you and the pitchforks."

Activist-thinker
Chicago

There is plenty to critique Obama on, but what shouldn't get lost is what *N&L* wrote about his election in the October-

November issue—that his election pointed beyond him. That's still important. There was a lot of thinking that the goal was to elect somebody better than Bush. I'm thinking about that because many who were uncritical of him when he was running for President are now super-critical. There are newer challenges to look at now, including how workers are going to respond when the state that is running the factory takes away their benefits.

Fred
Chicago



MUMIA ABU-JAMAL UPDATE

After accepting the Writ of Certiorari submitted by Mumia Abu-Jamal's lead counsel Robert R. Ryan in early February—asserting that African Americans were kept from sitting on the jury of Mumia's original trial solely for their race—the U.S. Supreme Court rejected it on April 6. On Feb. 13, Mr. Ryan turned in to the Court a Brief of Opposition to the prosecution's attempt to overturn U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Yohn's order for a new jury trial to decide whether Mr. Abu-Jamal will spend the rest of his life in prison or be executed. He remains wrongfully imprisoned for the murder of police officer Daniel Faulkner.

Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal
Oakland, Cal.

ISRAEL'S WAR ON GAZA

The February-March front page article, "Israel's War on Gaza Shows Need for Total Uprooting," was very true and has been the truth for a long time. If Obama does not understand Israel is *de facto* the tail that wags the American dog, he is in for a rude awakening. I have heard the "peace process" malarkey and "road to peace" con job for decades. *N&L* is exactly right: only a total uprooting of the entire situation has a chance. Just barely.

Observer
Tennessee Colony, Texas

I learned that the article in the February-March issue by Raha, "Revolution needed in Israel," was circulated to others in a group that has regular meetings here, to continue the discussion. There are many leftists who say Zionism is racism and the only position is to be for a one-state solution *vs.* a two-state solution. Anything less would mean you are a Zionist and for U.S. imperialism. It is a perspective that lets itself be defined by whatever is against U.S. imperialism, not by, as Gerry Emmett cites Raya Dunayevskaya in the Lead of that issue, "self-determination ... on truly Humanist foundations."

RK
Oakland, Cal.

GROWING STUDENT MILITANCY?

The occupation of the third floor of the Kimmel Center at New York University in February was organized by students of the Take Back NYU! Campaign. While short-lived and broken up by excessive police force, it was a breath of fresh air. The students' demands were the result of years of organizing and participating in the structures that are supposed to exist to facilitate some sort of limited control of University governance by the students. TBNYU! demanded collective bargaining for all student workers and T.A.s, full transparency of University finances, as well as international social justice programs such as giving money to the University of Gaza which was recently destroyed by the Israeli invasion.

The occupation by TBNYU! hopefully marks the beginning of a growing student militancy, which I think is even more important in a time when the ruling class will be demanding concessions from all of us in order to keep capitalist relations afloat in the face of recession and revolt.

Brown Douglas
Champaign-Urbana, Ill.

IOWA'S MESSAGE

The news that Iowa now recognizes same-sex marriage vindicates my telling people for years that it is a relatively progressive state, a really nice place in many ways, and that the red-state/blue-state thing is largely nonsense. It is a good lesson for snooty and out-of-touch West Coast and East Coast ("bi-coastal") liberals to learn. I always felt there is a reason News and Letters Committees is centered in the Midwest and why you pay attention to every part of the country. This is a fine moment for many reasons.

D. Cheneville
Northern California

URGENT APPEAL FROM IRAQI LGBT

Urgent action is needed to halt the execution of 128 prisoners on death row in Iraq. Many awaiting execution were convicted for the "crime" of homosexuality, according to Iraqi Lgbt, a UK-based organization of Iraqis supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in Iraq. It is reported that Iraqi authorities plan to start executing them in batches of 20, beginning in April. Ali Hili, of Iraqi Lgbt, has requested that the UK government, human rights groups and the UN Human Rights Commission intervene quickly to prevent this tragedy from going ahead. The death penalty has been increasing at an alarming rate in Iraq since the new Iraqi regime reintroduced it in August 2004. Amnesty International has called on the Iraqi authorities to make public all information pertaining to the 128 now on death row. For more information on how you can help, contact Iraqi Lgbt, 22 Notting Hill Gate, #111, London, W11 3JE, United Kingdom or at <http://iraqilgbtuk.blogspot.com/>

Iraqi Lgbt
London, UK

MIGRATING TO THE ECOLOGY STRUGGLE

People who want to escape from the frustrations of the class struggle often migrate to the struggle for a cleaner world. They haven't necessarily forgotten that a cleaner world is frustrated by the drive to produce and sell. They might see the recession as a good thing for the environment because we are making and selling less. All the factories on the South Side of Chicago have gone away, making it easier to breathe there. That kind of consumerist perspective is not reflected in the pages of *N&L*. Perhaps it should be. I read *N&L* fairly faithfully and I just don't see new things taken up. The paper updates me and keeps me current, but there are gaps. The editors could have an eye open wider for filling in the gaps.

Longtime supporter
Chicago

VOICES FROM WITHIN THE WALLS

Every time I receive *N&L* it brightens my day, week, the ninth year! I share it with all the others I can reach. The bad news is that it only comes six times a year. We all wish we could help make it more.

Prisoner
Susanville, Cal.

§

READERS: HAVE YOU SENT YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO HELP US KEEP NEWS & LETTERS GOING?

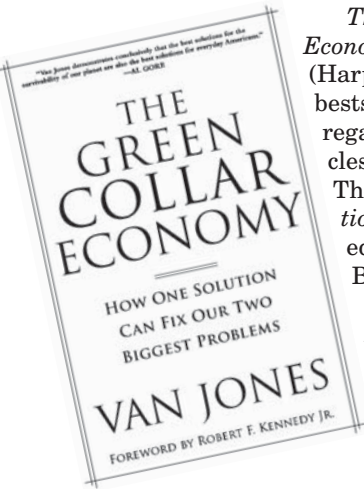


No halfway opposition to DOMA!

On March 2, some married, same-sex couples in Massachusetts filed suit against the federal government to overturn DOMA, the notorious "Defense of Marriage Act" passed by the Clinton Administration. Unfortunately, this is yet another example of the failure of the Queer movement to challenge injustice at its root.

If it is successful, the pending suit will not overturn DOMA in its entirety, a measure that even President Obama (who is against same-sex marriage, but is in favor of civil unions) supports. Rather, the suit narrowly challenges one provision of DOMA: the fact

Are capitalism and ecology compatible?



the book changes course. After what seems to be the beginnings of a social critique, it reverses itself and becomes an avid defense of the present social order and its presumed ability to solve today's problems, as if all that is required is a change in technology, not in social relations. As such, it is internally inconsistent.

For all of the talk about democracy, the underlying message is one of advocating only the very wealthy and powerful as agents of change. Whatever democracy it contains could be described more as "trickle-down" participation for the rest of the people, following the orders from the elite: the right to serve as muscle-power or as force, but not as Reason.

The environmental crisis is presented as such a great emergency that it requires that the economy and government be placed on a war footing, comparable to World War II; that we no longer have time for such things as democracy and social equality—as if these were luxuries and not the heart of our social ideals. Van Jones calls for the extensive use of presidential decree to make changes. What is puzzling is that he quotes with approval Niccolo Machiavelli in support of his thesis, and in the same paragraph also describes the environmental movement as a "crusade."

In the section on "The Amistad Meets the Titanic," Van Jones insists that the slave and the slave-owner have common interests. This metaphor doesn't work, however, since on this "ship," planet Earth, it is the slave-owners who have pulled the plug. Here, Van Jones denies the reality of social class and racism.

The Green Collar Economy promotes the notion that capitalism, which created this mess, could be the instrument for cleaning it up. And then, the technical solutions proposed are speculation and not well researched. The very idea of "green" capitalism is absurd, a contradiction in terms. *The Green Collar Economy* is an example of what has been called "green-tops" thinking.

Capitalism is redefining its own interests as Necessity, using ecology as leverage, and Van Jones, perhaps unintentionally, is one of those at the forefront of that process. There is a divide in the ecological movement today between those who carry the illusion that saving the environment can be done through technological solutions determined by a wealthy elite, and on the other hand those who understand that saving our planet requires deep social change, a world free of social class and inequality. This latter is where we find hope for the future.

—D. Cheneville

The Green Collar Economy by Van Jones (Harper-Collins, 2008) is a bestseller on ecology, well-regarded in corporate circles and by some liberals. The editors of *The Nation* have all but anointed it as being The Next Big Thing.

The Green Collar Economy begins with a description of many of today's social and environmental ills. Then, at the section on "Investment

that the federal government does not have to recognize same-sex marriages deemed legal by various states. What this means is that if the lawsuit is successful, same-sex couples in Massachusetts, Iowa, Vermont and Connecticut (the only states where same-sex marriage is legal) will have access to the federal rights of marriage under the equal protection clause. Couples in states like New York—which recognizes same-sex marriages from other states, but doesn't allow them to be performed in-state—would presumably get the same benefits as those in Massachusetts, Iowa, Vermont and Connecticut. However, same-sex couples in states where same-sex marriage is not legal will continue to face discrimination at the local, state, and federal levels. Simply put, this challenge does nothing for those of us who are the worst off in the struggle for marriage equality.

I understand that there are tactical reasons to prefer dismantling DOMA one step at a time. Same-sex couples in Massachusetts, Iowa, Vermont, Connecticut, and possibly New York stand to benefit tremendously from the current suit, assuming it's successful, and there are good reasons to think that it will be successful. But when the marriage equality movement addresses inequity at the federal level, as this suit proposes to do, there is a moral and political imperative to be sure that the benefits will accrue to all couples, not just those who are privileged enough to live in places where they're already doing a little bit better than the rest of us.

If we really believe that there's nothing our love cannot face—as many of us do—and we believe that injustice must always be faced, must always be challenged, and can never be allowed to stand unopposed, then we should **stop sacrificing principles** for tactics whenever the opportunity arises. DOMA should be opposed **in toto**.

—Amy

Political persecution



Shelly Resnick with her partner Acire Roche at the steps of the San Francisco courthouse on Feb. 23 challenging her persecution.

San Francisco—I am an activist for both Trans causes and sex workers causes. I have no trouble standing up in front of cameras saying what the police are doing is wrong. They will not come out and say they are going after me for my political activity, but it is awfully suspicious that on Nov. 5, 2008, the day after the election, after I did a lot of work on Proposition K, which would have decriminalized prostitution, SFPD claims that they received an anonymous complaint that I was sending out text messages to random numbers asking for sex. I flatly deny ever doing that. There is no evidence of any such message. It is political retaliation.

Then on Nov. 12 I got a call from someone who claimed to be from out of town, asking that I show them around. There is a tape recording of that conversation. At one point they asked if I am protected. I said I am always protected. They interpret that to mean condoms. They arrived at my apartment, I did not like the person I saw and I turned away. The person then identified himself as a police officer. They made a stink in my lobby, so I took them to my apartment where they seized my phone. The officer erased the log of my calls, specifically erasing the telephone number he called me from. He issued me a citation for solicitation.

On Jan. 7 the DA took it a step further. They claim that I took the officer to my apartment where prostitution was to occur and that I actually engaged in prostitution with him. Even the officer doesn't claim that. The DA filed charges against me for having sex with a cop, which is a waste of city resources. San Francisco has among the highest number of cops per 100,000 citizens, yet they are not prosecuting violent crimes. Just recently I was at a demonstration at the 24th and Mission BART station where a sister was kidnapped, brutally raped and murdered, her body thrown out on the street and they are not even investigating it! The message we get is that they don't care. It is easier for them to chase after girls who are trying to make some money than go after dangerous criminals who might fight back. Chasing girls is an easy beat.

—Shelly Resnick

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Vermont's legislature made same-sex marriage legal on April 7, overriding the governor's veto. Vermont was the first state to create civil unions for Gay and Lesbian couples. The House of New Hampshire passed a bill legalizing same-sex marriage in late March. It remains to be seen if it will pass the Senate.

"Harsh Realities: The Experiences of Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools" finds that Transgender students experience more abuse than their Bisexual, Lesbian and Gay peers. Ninety percent of Transgender students are victims of verbal abuse and more than 50% of physical abuse because of gender expression. This first comprehensive study on Transgender students also found that teachers and school administration frequently contribute to the harassment or don't intervene when Transgender students are being harassed. While harassment and abuse explain why Transgender students have lower grade point averages and school attendance, hope and courage explain why they are also more likely than Gay and Lesbian students to speak out about their harassment and GLBT issues.

Charity group ActionAid's "Hate Crimes" reports that Lesbians are increasingly being raped. Because South Africa's criminal justice system does not acknowledge hate crimes based on sexual orientation, it is believed that the number of rapes to "cure" Lesbians is higher than the number reported.

Prominent Lambda Istanbul Transgender activist Ebru Soykau was murdered in March. The man, from whom Ms. Soykau had asked for police protection after he beat and threatened to kill her, is being held. Only a few weeks before her murder, police detained the accused man for only two hours, which is **better** protection than most Transgender people get from Turkish authorities. In 2007 Lambda was told by Istanbul's then deputy governor that there were no records of several reports of violence against Transgender people.

Nigerian Lesbians and Gays courageously testified publicly against pending legislation that will imprison same-sex couples married anywhere and returning to Nigeria or anyone married to a same-sex partner traveling to Nigeria. In a country notorious for oppressing LGBT people, Rashidi Williams, 23, of Queer Alliance of Nigeria, testified at the National Assembly public hearings that, "This bill is not necessary, we see no reason why people should be criminalized." If passed, those convicted could spend as much as three years in prison.

—Information from 365Gay.com

Public universities and LGBT rights activists can keep anti-bias policies regarding sexual orientation, according to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The University of California's Hastings College of Law's refusal to recognize a branch of the Christian Legal Society, which bans membership to Gays and Lesbians, was upheld.

Debra Taylor resigned her teaching job at Grandfield High School in Oklahoma after being told to stop her students' project to film their own clips about the film *The Laramie Project*, based on the play of the same name that tells of the aftermath of Matthew Shepard's brutal murder. Her students rallied in her defense, held a funeral for the cancelled project, enclosed notes of their reflections into helium balloons which they released into the air.

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Nationwide protests against endless wars



Thousands marched through San Francisco calling for an end to the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Gaza on the sixth anniversary of the Iraq war.

Los Angeles—On the sixth anniversary of George W. Bush's U.S. war on Iraq, up to 4,000 demonstrated in Hollywood against that war as well as the war in Afghanistan and Israel's war on Gaza (see Feb.-Mar. *News & Letters*). The protesters were of diverse race and age and in high spirits. Protesters included Veterans for Peace, Bus Riders Union, News and Letters Committees, Socialist Workers, Screen Actors Guild members, Latino Immigrants, and many other groups and individuals.

A few of the many signs read: "Bring the Troops Home Now," "Close the School of the Americas," "Occupation Is a Crime," "We Demand Jobs," "Bail Out

People, Not the Banks," and "Big Oil, Record Profits. Iraq, Afghanistan, Record Deaths."

A flyer by the "L.A. Nuclear Disarmament Coalition" stated that "one bomb can destroy Los Angeles, Mexico City, or Washington, D.C.," and that "ten nuclear bombs is enough to wipe out all of civilization as we know it." Some listed web sites include global-assembly.net, International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War (ippnw.org), and nuclearweaponsfree.org.

One demonstrator expressed grave concern about President Barack Obama's reliance on the Pentagon to formulate policies on Afghanistan/Pakistan. The initial request for 17,000 additional troops was followed by a request weeks later for 4,000 "advisors," and during the G20 Summit in London, an additional request by the military for 10,000 more troops. The War Resisters League stated that U.S. military expenditure for 2009 will be 54% of federal expenditure, or \$1.449 trillion.

It will take a mass movement of workers, women, youth, Blacks and minorities globally to alter war production, as well as the practice of bailing out banks and the super-rich while more and more workers become unemployed and homeless. Capitalism must be abolished and replaced with a non-value-producing society, eliminating the drive to constantly expand production of ever more high-tech weapons and its resulting massive deaths, suffering and destruction with the threat of nuclear annihilation of all life.

—Basho

reform, and a speaker from the MSPJ spoke on progressive criminal justice reform. Marchers carried signs through downtown Memphis reminding President Obama to keep his campaign promises of ending the war and supporting social justice. During the march, demonstrators chanted, "Bail out the people, not the rich" and chanted demands for jobs and healthcare.

—Another marcher for peace

Chicago—Demonstrators marched two miles through the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago on March 14, protesting the continuation of the six-year-long war in Iraq, even more endless military campaigns in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and U.S. support for Israel's bloodletting in Gaza.

The 600 or more marchers included not just veterans of past anti-war marches, but youth and a significant number of Latinos. Still, the number of protesters this year was but a fraction of those who took to the streets when Bush first invaded Iraq in 2003, even as popular support for pursuing the war has continued to evaporate. Obama may be getting credit simply for not being Bush, but his promise to pull out of Iraq eventually recalls Nixon's secret plan to end the war in Viet-



Chicago marchers in Pilsen against the war and for immigrant rights.

nam.

The Obama administration will no longer prohibit coverage of funerals of military personnel returning home in coffins from Iraq and Afghanistan. Bush's blackout rule was rooted in the fear that supporters of the war could become opponents of war policy as casualties mounted—after all, heavy Soviet losses in Afghanistan contributed to the fall of Communist Party rule. Bush's fears might become Obama's as he aggressively extends the military reach of the U.S.

—Protester

Black Women: 'Save Public Education!'

New York—Black women spoke out on every aspect of public education from kindergarten through graduate school, addressing battles for community control, the history of public education, the need for better quality, and what education in a socialist society might look like. Over 60 people packed the hall, drawn to "The Fight to Save Public Education: Black Women Speak Out," sponsored by Radical Women.

Dr. Norma Abdulah, who was a founder of New York City's United Federation of Teachers in 1967, told us, "At first teachers opposed the union; they saw themselves as 'professionals.' But they realized that the National Education Association (NEA) was doing nothing, and they were being treated as blue collar workers. We had 40 children in a class and no prep periods."

Panelists and participants alike called for deep rethinking—one young woman student said we need something like the French revolution today. A man from Africa and Haiti commented that social services in this country are so fragmented that people are worn down before they get what they need. "We need to restructure the container," he concluded. Dr. Abdulah affirmed, "Public schools are so important: women, free slaves and socialists fought for public education; today we fight to keep it alive ... Socialism means the world is run to meet working-class needs and those of all excluded people, and arrives at its decisions democratically. We demand free pre-K-post-graduate education for all!"

Dr. Andrea Nicola McLaughlin, whose talk had described education as the primary battleground in African-American freedom struggles, related the founding of Medgar Evers College and Hostos College in New York's City University system to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement.

Sherrie M, a college student and mother of three more, said that now that the president of CUNY received a raise, he is cutting back and raising tuition. "The cuts will ricochet to our children and grandchildren. How do we organize students? There are no politicians on our side." Dr. Abdulah called for us to "Organize—labor can and must play an important role. Today's economic crisis presents greater challenges... We need to stop the cutbacks and we need full education programs, not just enough to pass tests. We need a united front: what would it take to bring together teachers and paraprofessionals, school staff and parents, and students and teachers? We need to demand no layoffs and no tuition hikes and demand that our union be more radical. Don't let students and teachers pay for the crisis created by bankers and bosses; bring all of humanity one step closer to socialism."

I agree that we need to bring together parents, teachers, paraprofessionals and students, but I think we also need to clarify the principles underlying this kind of unity, or we will not be able to achieve it. Ultimately, what would education itself, in a truly human society, look like? How can we identify quality teaching and learning? What working and learning conditions make that possible?

—Susan Van Gelder

Memphis—On March 21, the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center (MSPJ) sponsored its annual anti-war rally and march in front of the Civil Rights Museum. About 80 people marched, which is fewer than in previous years, but the low turnout seemed to be due to the rain earlier in the day. This year, the protest was titled "Keeping the Promise: March to End the War on the Poor," to remember the march planned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which aimed to make the connection between the violence of war and that of social oppression. At the rally, speakers from several local organizations spoke on these issues.

Veterans for Peace and Iraq Veterans Against the War spoke on ending the war. The Executive Director of WIN spoke on economic justice, and its Workers Center Organizer spoke on immigration. A speaker from the Tennessee Health Care Campaign spoke on healthcare

Brecht Forum panel: Herbert Marcuse for today

New York—About 75 people attended an "Author Meets Critic" book party to celebrate the publication of Arnold Farr's *Critical Theory and Democratic Vision, Herbert Marcuse and Recent Liberation Philosophies*. The event was held March 4 at Brecht Forum in New York. Speakers included Farr, Peter Marcuse, Steven Eric Bronner, and Russell Rockwell.

Farr emphasized that his work was an attempt to develop the liberating potential of philosophy and, as such, was a method to reach liberation. Theology, for example, when read from a place of privilege, is different than when read by poor and oppressed people. There are two strands in the same text: One is that of control and domination of others, the other provides emancipatory tools. Farr held that movements in philosophy (such as in Marcuse's work) originate from the cry of the oppressed, and that his book attempts to put Marcuse in dialogue with today's liberation movements. In doing so, his work situates Marcuse historically. It takes up *Eros and Civilization* and how, for example, Marcuse's theories speak to recent feminist theories of the body and consciousness.

Bronner emphasized that, contrary to some interpretations, Marcuse's work, such as *One-Dimensional Man*, actually brought class back into focus as a key to understanding contemporary society. Marcuse viewed the activity of marginalized groups in U.S. society, such as Blacks, the unemployed, and others as potentially providing the spark for radical social transformations traditionally associated with class struggles. Important for understanding Marcuse was the distinction he drew between "utopia" and "utopian." Marcuse always retained a vision of the realization of a liberated society, but he consistently eschewed "utopianism" as a form of thought.

Peter Marcuse, Professor Emeritus of Urban Planning at Columbia University, discussed urban activists around city-planning, as trying to make things better; but they are unable to do it. He noted that the Marxism that underlay his father's work consistently held that

it's a question of changing the system. Housing should be de-commodified—people should not be allowed to buy and sell houses for profit—housing should only be a use-value. People ask "what kind of utopia?" It is the wrong question; in negation of the negation, the second negation is the idea of what should exist, a positive theory and practice link.

Rockwell said he became acquainted with Marcuse's work, especially on Hegel's *Science of Logic*, through the Marxist-Humanist philosopher, Raya Dunayevskaya. His interest developed through work on the volume of the complete correspondence between Dunayevskaya and Marcuse and Dunayevskaya and Fromm during the years 1954-1978, which he said will be published in the not too distant future.

Rockwell stressed Marcuse's uniqueness—the continuity he represented with the Russian Revolution through his participation (along with Rosa Luxemburg, who hoped to spread the revolution throughout Europe) in the 1919 German Spartacist Uprising, during which he joined the revolutionary soldiers' councils. Marcuse also represented a continuity with Marx—in the sense that as early as 1932 he was among the first to analyze Marx's 1844 *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*, the humanist essays, which had been buried in the archives since Marx's death one half-century earlier. Rockwell also engaged an important theme in Farr's book—Marcuse's interpretations of Hegel in his two Hegel books—*Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, and *Reason and Revolution*, both written in the decade from 1932-1941. Rockwell argued that as special as the two works were in analyzing Hegel's Theoretical and Practical Ideas from the *Science of Logic*, neither brought to the fore Hegel's crucial "conclusion": the Practical Idea makes the transition (to a unity of theory and practice) **through itself**. Rockwell tied this to important themes in Farr's book, especially their concern with Marcuse's (and Farr's) commitment to the self-development of various subjects of social change.

—Russell Rockwell

WORLD VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

Thirty years after the fall of the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime, joint UN/Cambodian trials of a few Khmer Rouge leaders have finally begun in Phnom Penh. The scope is limited, with chief torturer Duch (Kaing Guek Eav) currently facing charges. He was in

Congo and militias

The Congolese and Rwandan army offensive against Eastern Congo-based Rwandan Hutu militias has had a degree of success. The UN estimates that up to 300,000 Congo refugees have been able to return to their village homes. However, it is also reported that when the army forces have withdrawn, the militias have returned to take revenge upon some villages.

The UN "peacekeepers," the largest such force in the world, have done little to stop the looting, murders and rapes committed in Eastern Congo's war. Rape is so common that the UN Development Program has rated Congo as the world's worst country to be a woman.

It is made worse by the stigma that is carried by a rape victim. She is considered "dirtied," shamed, and her husband or father is expected to disown her in order to regain his "respect" in the traditional community. The hundreds of thousands of women who have suffered all this receive little attention or aid from outside.

Local women's groups have been more serious about responding. For example, at great personal risk, activists from the Women's Media Association in Bukavu (AFEM) have travelled to villages where women have been subjected to rape and other atrocities. They have recorded interviews with survivors and got them aired on local radio to help expose the problem and change attitudes.

As AFEM's Franchou Namegabe said recently, "In African traditions, it is difficult to talk about sex on the radio. It was a shock. A scandal. But for them, it was a first step to heal their wounds" (*Women's eNews*).

China workers' revolt



The global meltdown has curbed China's explosive economic growth, plummeting from 11.7% for 2007 to 6.8% for the last quarter of 2008 and projected to fall nearer 5% for the first quarter of 2009. Sounds healthier than the actual "negative growth" worldwide, but for the world's workshop this has meant shuttered factories and ballooning unemployment, over 2.7 million newly unemployed just in the export-oriented new industrial cities near Hong Kong alone.

Workers' resistance to these job losses has heated up confrontations with government forces. Police stopped a planned march of textile workers from their closed factory in Baoding to Beijing, and have repeatedly intervened against other demonstrations by workers cut loose from export industry.

China is counting on millions of the newly unemployed migrant work force, with no legal right to remain in the cities they had worked in, returning to rural poverty in the interior rather than joining in protests. But even in the boom years many of the nearly 100,000 strikes and demonstrations annually have taken place in rural areas whose exploitation has helped feed the economic engine.

With the clout that two trillion dollars in foreign currency reserves gives it, China has pressed for a more dominant voice in currency policy, but it is still running scared: its economic stimulus package is an attempt to quickly return to at least 8% growth, below which unemployment will continue to rise, as would unrest.

Timing could not have been worse for the Hu Jintao regime, as rising unemployment coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Important anniversaries in 1989 of the founding of the Communist Party of China and of the May Fourth Movement helped extend marches and occupations from April 15 until the bloody suppression June 4, 1989. Now anyone publicly raising the massacre, professor or ex-soldier or mother of one killed on Tiananmen Square, is detained or under police scrutiny.

—Bob McGuire

Khmer Rouge trials after 30 years

charge of S-21 prison, where more than 14,000 alleged "enemies of the revolution" were murdered. Others facing trial are the regime's ex-president Khieu Samphan; Ieng Sary, its foreign minister, and his wife; and "Brother Number Two" Nuon Chea.

"Brother Number One" Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge leader, died in captivity in 1998 after factional fighting within the group. They had become isolated after the U.S. and China withdrew support for their guerrilla war, and the royalists they had allied with deserted them to make a deal with the current government.

Cambodia's premier, Hun Sen, has warned that any wider trials could reignite civil war in the country. Hun Sen himself was a Khmer Rouge commander who defected to Vietnam in 1977, two years before Vietnamese forces overthrew Pol Pot's regime. They then installed a new government made up largely of mid-level Khmer Rouge cadres. Hun Sen became premier in 1985.

Anlong Veng in northern Cambodia was the last area the Khmer Rouge retained control of in 1998, and they are still in charge of the government there today. Some run profitable businesses and own large proper-

ties. Historian David Chandler described the deal they made with the government: "They have to behave to a certain extent but Hun Sen is not going to mess with them too much. I don't think these are dedicated left-wing thinkers or performers. I think they abandoned that and got into the money and the patronage situation and are perfectly happy."

Hun Sen stated recently, "If as many as 20 Khmer Rouge are indicted to stand trial and war returns to Cambodia, who will be responsible for that?" Many Cambodian human rights activists disagree, holding that the estimated 1.7 million victims of Khmer Rouge brutality are deserving of justice. Until recently, the Cambodian government has not even treated them as deserving of memory—the history of the Khmer Rouge genocide is not taught in the state schools.

The population of Cambodia today includes a majority of young people who did not experience the Khmer Rouge brutalities, but have grown up hearing about them at home, like a dark folklore. Hun Sen may not want to take any responsibility for the deaths of 1.7 million victims, but neither should he be able to bury them a second time for his own "good cause."

Latin American Notes

Mexico—Since the beginning of Felipe Calderon's presidency, there has been a sharp escalation of the war on drug cartels centering on Calderon's unprecedented decision to involve tens of thousands of Mexican army troops in the fight. A military occupation of the border states and border cities like Ciudad Juarez has taken place. In response the narco-gangs have unleashed a reign of violence. Wars between narco-gangs involving execution-style murders, beheadings, kidnappings have erupted, with a dozen and more deaths every night. Attacks using sophisticated high-power weapons on police stations and police patrols as well as army troops are daily occurrences.

However, it is not simply a vicious shoot-out between rival drug gangs, and a war with the police and the military. Over many years the drug cartels have been smuggling drugs and bribing policemen, police chiefs, politicians and many others. The U.S. is strongly involved as well, not alone as the consumer of illegal drugs, but as the principal supplier of the high-powered, sophisticated weapons that the cartels use to out-gun the police and military. An estimated 90% of captured weapons have their origin in the gun shops and weapon suppliers in the U.S.

Furthermore, a new report from a number of human rights organizations accuse the Mexican military of illegal searches, arrests without cause, rape, sexual abuse and torture. Mexico's National Human Rights Commission reported 1,230 complaints last year versus 182 in 2006.

The question of militarization is not alone a question of one side of the border. The governor of Texas is calling for 1,000 National Guard troops to be sent to the border areas of his state. This, in addition to the huge increase in border patrol agents that were deployed under the Bush administration.

One of the most alarming results of the Bush

years was a policy that conflated the smuggling of illegal drugs across the border with the movement of undocumented workers north from Mexico and the countries of Central America. Thousands of border agents as well as immigrant agents inside the U.S. have spent their time pursuing non-citizens whose only crime is wanting to work. Meanwhile the drug wars spin out of control. Whether the Obama administration will separate drugs and undocumented workers, and push for a comprehensive immigration reform remains to be seen.

* * *

El Salvador—In a remarkable victory, the candidate backed by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), Mauricio Funes, won the presidency of El Salvador. The defeat of the extreme right Nationalist Republican Alliance party (ARENA), after more than two decades of rule, marks a turning point. The FMLN had participated in a civil war in the 1980s and 1990s—a period marked by tens of thousands of murders and disappearances of Salvadoran citizens, including massacres of dozens at a time. The Salvadoran military and its paramilitary support groups were primarily responsible. After the peace accords were finally signed, ARENA-backed candidates continued in power. But their decades of rule proved a dead-end. Spiraling food prices and a runaway murder rate characterize El Salvador at the present moment.

While the election of an FMLN-backed candidate does mark a new beginning, it represents a difficult challenge. El Salvador's impoverishment is daunting, and fully 25% of its population is in exile, the majority in the U.S. Reestablishing local food production and creating a nationalized healthcare system are two priorities that Funes hopes to implement. El Salvador has now joined the movement to the left of many Latin American countries.

—Eugene Walker

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by RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

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THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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WORKSHOPTALKS

When unions think like capitalists

by Htun Lin

Worker actions in France have exploded since the economic meltdown. One of the latest was a protest of health workers against President Sarkozy's health "reform" law that will let managers put a cap on the level of care given to patients. Nurses demonstrating in Montparnasse on May 14 were livid.

A Black nurse, Rachida Ahloulay, told Andrew Hussey of *New Statesman*: "We are sick of being told we have no control over our own lives. It's not just that the government is giving managers the power over medical staff, but it means that we are degraded as citizens. And that is why France is on the edge of a serious rebellion. Anger is everywhere!"

This outrage is taking place in a country known for having affordable, universal health care that far surpasses the quality of care in the U.S. Yet workers' struggles to control their own work are the same everywhere. For capital, "reform" always means interfering with health care delivery by diminishing resources to accommodate capital's need to accumulate.

Ahloulay's lament reminds me of our own ongoing struggle to provide quality care. Many look to labor unions for answers, but often unions too become sucked into capitalist thinking and become nothing more than the first barrier to workers' emancipation. There is no resolution to this crisis outside of workers overcoming alienation from their own labor.

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BLACK/REVIEW

by John Alan

Racism and politics

Editor's note: As John Alan is ill, we are reprinting his column on "Racism in politics" from October 2000, which speaks to today's new reality of an African-American president.

During this presidential election year, both the Republican and the Democratic parties have claimed that they are "ethnically inclusive and diverse." The Republican Party had on the stage of its convention hall an unusual number of African Americans, and Colin Powell, a retired African-American general, opened its convention with an inspiring speech. The Democratic Party, with its large number of African-American delegates, gave Jesse Jackson prime time to extol the liberalism of the Democratic Party and denounce the conservatism of the Republican Party.

Now, what does all the apparent racial integration of those two capitalist parties actually mean for the masses of African Americans and other people of color, like Latinos? Very little. To imply that the racial and ethnic composition of a capitalist political party will resolve today's dire economic and social problems and the practices of racism is deceptive and false.

POLITICS PROTECTS CAPITALISM

It is false, because the essential reason for the existence of today's political parties is to preserve and to protect the interests of capitalism, that is, the accumulation of capital, which creates at the same time wealth and its opposite, poverty, classism and racism. U.S. capitalism has cultivated racism since its very beginnings, when the early settlers claimed lifelong slavery for those indentured servants who were Black.

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Specter of revolution stalks Iran

by Gerry Emmett

A woman is clubbed to the ground by riot police, then stands up again to berate them as they walk away. A group of young women link arms to block a street against Basij militia thugs. A lone woman raises her fist against the approaching police—a moment reminiscent of Tiananmen Square's "Tank Man." These are scenes which have been repeated countless thousands of times in the mass demonstrations following Iran's disputed June 12 election.

Tehran has seen massive outpourings, perhaps as many as three million June 15. Other cities, Isfahan, the Azeri city of Tabriz, Shiraz, and villages across Iran have also seen demonstrations and street fighting. In the wake of these demonstrations, the regime has blocked web and mobile phone services, and placed opposition political figures and journalists under arrest. Dozens have been killed, including students pulled from their dormitories after midnight. These youth are attacked because they are in the forefront of the mass movement. In spite of all, mass unrest has reached levels not seen since the Revolution of 1979.

The claim that current president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won re-election with 62.6% of the vote to challenger Mir Hossein Mousavi's 33.7% was thoroughly rejected. It is just as likely that the real numbers could be the reverse, considering the massive level of discontent with the regime, the unprecedented mass demonstrations that broke out in the week before the election, and the massive voter turnout, on an order that was last seen when the "reformer" Khatami was elected.

WORKERS, WOMEN, YOUTH DISPUTE VOTE

Significantly, an Iranian Labor Union association poll taken in the week before the election showed Mousavi with 52% support among workers to Ahmadinejad's 36%, with 57.3% agreeing that labor's conditions have worsened under the current administration. One Iranian worker said after the results were announced, "Almost everybody I know voted for Mousavi but Ahmadinejad is being declared the winner. The government announcement is nothing but widespread fraud."

Mousavi was hardly an ideal figure. He was a prime minister during the 1980s, an era of harsh repression of all opposition to Ayatollah Khomeini's regime. Mousavi made the decision to serve that mas-

ter, and it haunted him during the election campaign. Asked by a student at Babol University about his role during the massacre of thousands of political prisoners in 1988, he was unable to answer the question. Finally he said, "I was the head of the executive branch and not the judiciary."

Nevertheless, as one voter put it, "The fact is, there are vote counters out there who know very well exactly how we and millions of other Iranians voted. They know, and it terrifies them. If we had not participated, we would not have been able to send that message at all."

Mousavi's campaign was conceived as a way to deal with divisions among the ruling circles. It wasn't planned to go farther than that. The situation has gone **much** farther now.

Divisions among the rulers were exposed when Ahmadinejad attacked senior regime figures and clerics during the televised presidential debate. They were as apparent with the maneuvers by former president Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani and others to support Mousavi. (It is also significant that some members of the Revolutionary Guards have refused to attack demonstrators, and there have even been reports of police arresting violent members of the Basij.)

DIVISIONS AMONG RULERS

However, there was also enough content in Mousavi's criticisms of the Ahmadinejad administration that his campaign could be said to represent an "opening," not so much to "the West" as to the Iranian people themselves. While he rightly criticized Ahmadinejad's Holocaust denial and military threats, Mousavi also said at the televised debate, "Wherever I go there is protest; wherever I go they say we have been humiliated, we have been arrested, we have been expelled from university and so on." The regime searched for itself in the people's eyes, but was horrified to see in them a vision of its ending.

Of course, the elections aren't the ultimate ground being contested. Women's determination to tear up their oppression by its root has been continuous. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 held promise of becoming the most profound social revolution since 1917. Women's liberation was a vital part of that revolutionary ferment, and a primary target of the clerical counter-revolution that came from the very innards of the revolution.

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WOMAN & REASON

by Terry Moon

The murder of Dr. George Tiller by an anti-abortion fanatic is a tragedy. Tiller was a courageous freedom fighter and by all accounts a kind, generous, dedicated doctor who said, "I am a woman-educated physician in every aspect of my understanding about abortion and about responsibility of women in the family, both socially and financially." His death is also a tragedy for the women he has helped who had life-threatening pregnancies, or pregnancies with fetuses so deformed that if born their lives would have been short, wracked with pain, and devastating to their parents emotionally and financially. And it is especially a tragedy for those women who will need his help in the future and have nowhere to turn, who will die because they cannot get to the two doctors left in the entire U.S. who will perform late-term abortions; or who will suffer unnecessary health consequences; or will be forced to have those deformed babies, born without brains or complete nervous systems or whatever horrendous abnormality caused the woman carrying them to resort to such a soul-wrenching and medically serious decision.

These women have been lost in the noise generated

Tragedy of Dr. Tiller's murder

by an anti-abortion movement so riddled with misogyny and so successful in their lies and omissions that it drowns out women's voices. Those voices have been trumped by a clump of cells, smaller than a thumbnail, which fanatics conflate with a child. That the anti-abortion movement is riddled with fanatics is seen in how none of them can hide their glee at Tiller's death, can help themselves from using Tiller's murder by one of their own to trumpet to the skies their demented belief that fetus=child, fetus trumps woman/mother, that terminating a pregnancy is the same as gunning down an unarmed George Tiller in his church.

CONTEMPTIBLE HYPOCRISY

Their mantra, as expressed by The Most Rev. Carlos A. Sevilla and scores of others, is that they have "respect for all human life, from conception to natural death." While pretending to oppose Tiller's murder, they can't help but broadcast their claim that killing him is exactly the same as an abortion. And these are the ones with whom we're supposed to find "common ground"! R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was most disgusting: Tiller's

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Women's 'right to become'

Below is a talk given by a participant at the vigil for Dr. Tiller held June 5 in Chicago.

Dr. Tiller was murdered—a man who lived, breathed, loved and worked with women, so that we could have some measure of freedom. He recognized our humanity, and in that recognition demonstrated his own. He was a freedom fighter.

His murder makes it more clear to me what "life" is and how different life could be if we universalized the meaning of the work he did and the concept of humanity he practiced. The murder of Dr. Tiller is horrifying in and of itself. It is all the more so when you think about why he was murdered: to stop women from controlling our own bodies and lives. It could only happen in a society that does not see women as fully human and believes that humanity must be stopped from determining, with purpose, its own future.

The religious fanatics who killed Dr. Tiller believe that a biologically developing fetus is a human being. They love that a fetus merely exists—never mind that it is within a woman's body—because a fetus can remain god's perfect, mute creation. Women, on the other hand, live beyond mere existence, creating our lives and relationships. To the fanatics, this makes us less than the fetus and a threat to god, men and even country. Their 1991 chant, "Support our unborn troops," shows their total contempt for all of humanity.

A video shown by a Chicago feminist organization had interviews with different generations of women

WOMAN
AS
REASON

Tiller
murder
tragedy

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murder requires "us," Mohler said, "to make clear that violence in the womb will never be overcome by means of violence outside the womb." But the "womb" is not a disembodied battleground. The womb is part of a live human being who is still allowed—barely—to actually make a decision about her own body.

Their contemptible hypocrisy is seen in how none of these good Christians has ever done anything to protest the hate speech, the websites spewed by fanatics like Operation Rescue's "chargetiller.com," the *Prayer and Action News* that promotes murdering abortion providers as "justifiable homicide," or the hundreds of sites that give out information on abortion providers' children, doctors' home addresses and the streets they take to work and back. None of them uttered a peep of protest against Operation Rescue's head Randall Terry who, after Tiller's murder, shrilled that "George Tiller was a mass murderer, and, horrifically, he reaped what he sowed"; not a whisper against Bill O'Reilly's rants against Tiller as "executing fetuses," as "a baby killer," or that Tiller "is performing late-term abortions without defining the specific medical reasons why." This is an outright lie since the only legal reason for late-term abortions is to protect a woman's life or health.

OBAMA NOT BLAMELESS

And where is President Obama? His two-sentence utterance of "shock and outrage"—followed by not another word or action—rings hollow. Why didn't his administration send someone to Tiller's funeral? That might have meant something. The criminal non-enforcement of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act by Obama's and every other president's Justice Department, an act forbidding the use of "force, threats of force or physical obstruction" to prevent someone from providing or receiving reproductive health services including abortion, certainly contributed to Tiller's death. His murderer vandalized another Kansas women's health clinic only a day before he gunned down Dr. Tiller. And while the clinic's manager called the FBI twice as well as the Kansas City Police Department and included the murderer's picture and license number, they did nothing.

Obama's call for "common ground" between those opposing abortion rights and those for a woman's right to control her own body, contributes to a climate where anti-abortion extremism is viewed as normal, as OK. He is wrong to put those who view a fetus's existence as being the same as, or above, a woman's life, on the same level as those who are working for women's freedom, as if both are extreme positions. There can be no common ground with fanatics, and Obama's attempt to frame the question in that manner only helps the foes of women's freedom and endangers all those who fight for or work in the area of reproductive rights.

Out of this profound tragedy has emerged a renewed commitment of those in the movement for reproductive justice to make women's freedom a reality. In the depth and breadth of the demonstrations against Tiller's murder that have swept this country from end to end, we see that beginning. In Dr. George Tiller's name and to honor his life, the struggle continues.

who had abortions—from pre-Roe to the present. What was so disturbing is how many of the young women internalized the anti-choice rhetoric that abortion is murder and that they are selfish for having one and stupid for "getting pregnant" in the first place.

It screamed out to me that we feminists need to clarify our philosophy. If we women recognized our own humanity, our own importance and our own validity to make decisions about who we are and who we want to become and in relation to whom, then it would be impossible to think of ourselves as selfish murderers for having an abortion.

After the video showing, several women in the audience talked about the need for post-abortion counseling. My reaction is the same as when I hear pro-choicers trying to "find common ground" with the anti-choicers by focusing on "prevention" and the need to "make abortion rare." Underlying these arguments is an assumption that abortion is murder, dirty and ugly.

While some women may need post-abortion counseling, particularly the kind of women Dr. Tiller treated—those who wanted babies, and child rape and incest victims—I think our time as a movement would be better spent talking about how to conceive of ourselves as human, human beings who are in the process of becoming whole and free, individually and collectively. If we did this we wouldn't internalize the hatred the anti-choicers have for us.

Let's focus on "making rare" the idea that women are not fully human and that we should not, cannot create our own futures. Let's "reduce the number of" women who need counseling because they believe they are murderers and selfish. Let's stop talking about "prevention" in terms of "reducing abortions." Let's talk about women's liberation and the power to determine our sexuality, lives, and world. Let's talk about making the world better for ourselves and children. The murder of Dr. Tiller can help us rethink how we talk about abortion and bring back its liberatory content and broader implications: self-determination for every woman, child and man.

Speaking out about our own abortion experiences is an important way to combat women's shame and to take back the ground of the abortion debate. I had an abortion when I was 24 and I'm not sorry. I don't feel and never have felt guilty. It was not "the hardest decision" I ever made and I don't feel it should be a "deeply personal" secret. My body conceived what my mind could not. My heart is so grateful that I made the decision I did and that there was a doctor, another human being, who recognized my right to life, my right to become. Dr. Tiller was a man, a human being with a life. He had a right to life and so do we. —Sonia Bergonzi

Boston vigil for hero

Boston—The vigil here on June 1 for Dr. Tiller drew several hundred downtown. Speakers who knew Tiller told personal stories about his persistence, optimism and unwavering bravery. One NARAL organizer spoke of meeting him at a conference, where he was giving out pieces of carved glass. Some were etched with the word "courage," some said "justice." The organizer stood there trying to decide which to take, when Dr. Tiller looked at her and told her to take both, that she needed both of them. They were in her pocket now, she said.

Others told personal abortion stories. One woman spoke of her back-alley abortion in the early 1970s, of being driven blindfolded by four men to a secret location, of having to self-abort with a wire coat hanger coated in rubber, of being sick with a 105 degree fever for a week and being cared for by her roommate who was a nurse, and of being shamed by a doctor who examined her later and demanded to know what she had done to herself. Another woman related her story of having to travel all over the South for her procedure, being shuttled from one clinic to another due to lack of appropriate services in her community. She'd never told her story before to anyone except her closest friends, and received applause from the entire room.

The most common feeling that resonated throughout the vigil, though, was one of purpose. The microphone began as a place for mourning, and eventually became a place where speakers took turns making promises to the room and to the movement at large. A former anti-choice activist expressed remorse, saying that she felt guilt that anything she said or did could have contributed to Dr. Tiller's murder. She then vowed to become a clinic escort so that she could put her body between the terrorists and the doctors and patients.

Abortion providers expressed a renewed sense of purpose, and promised to continue with their work. Men vowed to listen to women, and women who had never been activists before promised to take up the banner and do their part.

We walked out of the vigil singing songs and carrying candles for Dr. Tiller, and for the pro-choice movement at large. The mood was appropriately somber, but we were left with a sense of purpose, of history, and of determination. —Robin J.

Stop the killing of abortion providers!



Her sign reads: "Keep abortion legal," and her T-Shirt says: "I had an abortion."

Chicago—We rallied in several ways after the murder of Dr. George Tiller by an anti-abortion fanatic. Close to 30 rallied and held an open discussion at a candlelight vigil for Dr. Tiller called by the local chapter of NARAL on June 5. A few days earlier, on June 1, about 80 people joined with thousands who demonstrated from California to New

York. We gathered downtown behind a banner reading, "Abortion on demand and without apology." On June 10 about 20 people counter-demonstrated against "Pro-Life Action League," who assaulted Chicago with huge blow-ups of supposedly aborted fetuses and pamphlets full of lies about abortion in general. Their glee over Dr. Tiller's murder was unambiguous.

—Reproductive justice activist

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Hewad High School, a co-ed school for Afghan refugees in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, operated by the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), is under threat of being bombed by the Pakistani Taliban because they are co-ed. The people who live around the school asked that the school close or separate benches be made for boys and girls, because they feared such an attack. The Afghan Embassy refused to protect the school, and the Pakistani police ordered the school closed and moved within two days. The new location they found has much higher rent, and no security for refugees and poor Pakistanis. Donations to help them continue can be made online at www.sawa-australia.org

—Information from RAWA

A march of 5,000 people in May protested Joe Arpaio's reign of terror over prisoners in the Durango Jail in Phoenix, Ariz. More than 500 women prisoners there then organized and declared a hunger strike. Five days later, 400 male prisoners joined those women and together they are demanding an end to the human rights abuses, racist intimidation, wretched living conditions and mistreatment, rotten and poisonous food, and sexual misconduct by the guards. Joint action within prisons is not easy, so it is very significant that the women's hunger strike sparked solidarity from the men.

—Information from Urszula Wislanka

Rapes in the Democratic Republic of Congo have been soaring in recent months, as part of a growing tactic to use rape as a weapon of war. In Sud-Kivu, during just the last three months, there have been more rapes reported than half of the total reported in all of last year. Thousands of Congolese women marched in Kinshasa in late 2008 to protest these atrocities. Also, a survey of women in a Chad refugee camp who had fled violence in Darfur revealed at least a third had been raped by either militiamen in the Sudan, or villagers around their refugee camp.

Hundreds of students, women and men, protested sexual assault and rape at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., in April. Feminists from all walks of life stormed the campus to say that sexual violence is a problem on all campuses and students are fighting back.

The Dominican Republic's National Assembly has voted to amend its constitution to say "the right to life is inviolable from conception until death." Apparently, women's lives are not included since there are no exceptions for abortions in case of rape, incest, or the endangerment of a woman's life or health. Both the doctors and women face prison sentences.



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Capitalism restructures GM at workers' expense

Detroit—The most massive attack against the working class in the U.S. moved full speed ahead with the bankruptcy filings by General Motors and Chrysler. Under the threat of bankruptcy, the United Auto Workers, under President Ron Gettelfinger, made many concessions including reductions in pension and healthcare benefits, cutting payments to the Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA) that pays healthcare benefits, and a variety of workplace changes that will increase speedup and reduce relief time and days off.

This was in addition to previous concessions that included a two-tier wage scale that slashed the pay for new employees from \$27 to \$14 an hour. The most stunning concessions were a wage freeze and a no-strike provision until 2015! Not only did the union bureaucracy betray the workers by taking away their strongest negotiating weapon, it also assured a decline in the standard of living of the remaining auto workers.

At GM, at least 17,000 more workers are to be laid off under the plan with the closing of 14 plants and while 2,100 auto dealerships. What the final decisions will be will not be known until GM emerges from bankruptcy, which is expected to be in July or August.

Whatever comes out of these hearings, the damage has been done to U.S. workers. The UAW was one of the largest and strongest unions in the country. While its history of concessions has been decades in the making, nothing has been as crushing as the raft of concessions made since the meltdown of the economy. This has totally altered the world of U.S. workers, creating ominous implications for both unemployed and employed.

For the unemployed, the crisis is total. No job now, and no job in sight, often means loss of home and can extend to the dissolution of families and physical and mental illness. Newspapers, magazines, TV and the internet are increasingly full of such reports. For the employed, there is more speedup, little prospect of future improvement and mounting despair also leading to mental and physical distress.

WORKSHOPTALKS

continued from p. 1

Recently, we heard that the California Nurses' Association (CNA) has entered into an agreement to divvy up territory with Andy Stern, the notorious SEIU head whose idea of growth is raiding other unions' membership while being a champion for capital. Andy Stern has long been a blatant sellout bureaucrat who has signed up new members in HMOs and nursing homes by making back-room sweetheart deals with management, undercutting workers' as well as patients' interests.

UNION TURF BATTLES

CNA, on the other hand, has a clear and strong track record representing healthcare workers' fundamental interests, as well as advocacy for patients' interest in quality care. The Faustian bargain with labor's enemy reveals how much a top-down attitude has also infected CNA leadership. This bureaucratic mentality sees membership as something to be managed from above. Often it's all about dues. Membership drives become nothing more than turf battles with competing unions fighting over revenue from dues check-off administered by management.

Meanwhile, Sal Rosselli of United Healthcare West (UHW) initiated a drive to "decertify" SEIU from his local, which was recently put under trusteeship, in a hostile takeover engineered by Andy Stern. They act as if we have no ability to think for ourselves, as if they own our members.

Instead of decertifying SEIU from our local, we should not even allow Stern to have any locals under his control. The question is not just what is to become of UHW, but what is to become of all our brothers and sisters under the domination of that international. That is why it is so disturbing that CNA would voluntarily cede territory and thereby condemn a whole segment of healthcare workers to Stern's dictatorial control.

Labor bureaucrats bargain over membership drives as if they were capitalists competing for market share. They buy into that role because the struggle against alienation in our workplace is not even on their map.

TEAM PLAYERS?

Where I work, local union leaders meet with members, only to admonish us to be team players in management's plan. They even lecture us to be glad just to have a job and to help the company thrive in the global market. They act as if there is no alternative, and that workers' welfare is secondary to corporate welfare.

We need to return to nurse Ahloulay's concern about having "no control over our lives." We should not focus on what happens to a particular faction among the labor bureaucracy when the real issue is ceding the power to limit healthcare.

Ahloulay's lament is a stark reminder to us all that in spite of all the highfalutin' rhetoric over universal healthcare, nothing will change the current hegemony of capital over our work lives unless we deal directly with the problem of alienation in the workplace.

At the same time, there is growing resentment and revolt. This is an historic opportunity to make truly transformative changes in society. Instead of pointing to the obvious inability of this economic system to provide even the bare necessities of life and calling for a societal reorganization to meet human needs, labor leaders capitulate to maintain existing conditions that cry out for abolition.

Those who look to the Obama administration for answers are doomed to failure. Some reforms may indeed be made, along with pronouncements of "progress," but Obama has assembled an administration to save this failed capitalist system.

Their way of thinking is totally conditioned by capitalist principles guided by the bottom line—profitability. That is the objective of the trillions of dollars being devoted to try to rescue the failed banks, financial institutions, industries and crumbling societal infrastructure. This is the kind of thinking these experts must

Steelworker protest



Workers and labor supporters demonstrate April 17 in front of Commercial Forged Products protesting racism, disrespect, arbitrary suspensions, and refusal to recognize the union president.

Chicago—In an ongoing struggle against racism and injustice at Commercial Forged Products (see "Fighting Racism at Commercial Forged," April-May 2009 *N&L*), the company promised to meet with the union to discuss racial and anti-worker issues at the plant but has not followed through on two occasions, even though we kept our promise not to have any further protest marches until we met.

We have lived up to our end, but, again, the company has not. This is the problem. The company is not taking these racial issues seriously. In fact, the company has accused the union of being racist against management.

As a result, we began planning another march to take place in July. We had a huge response from community activists, faith leaders, unions and politicians after the April 17 protest march. They were interested in our struggle for civil rights and workers' rights at Commercial Forged Products.

Unfortunately this is a minority-owned company that's attacking the rights of minority workers. How hypocritical can they be!

—Charles Gilyard

Fired but no union help

San Francisco—I have been employed at Grand Hyatt Hotel in Union Square for 33 years, mostly as a housekeeper. Last year, 23 employees were denied their seniority benefits and asked me to represent them. We won their benefits, but I lost my job.

The management didn't like me fighting for others. They took away my days off, created traps for me, like leaving \$2,000 in a room with a hidden camera. I didn't take it, so they could not use that to fire me. There was no reason for my termination, but they fired me anyway. Unite HERE Local 2 has not been there for me.

Our shop steward was not elected by us. She was appointed by union management, although she is assistant manager in the hotel. She accused me of hurting her standing as a steward when I asked that she grieve the wrongful termination. The union does not take up my case: there is no picket line, no representation.

My unemployment benefit was denied. The hotel is retaliating against my sister, too. Other workers are scared to show support for me, because they know they will be next. Is the steward union or is she management? How can she be both?

At a San Francisco Labor Council meeting on May 11, Mike Casey, Unite HERE Local 2 representative to the Council, told me not to speak about the problem with the steward. He said if I do, he will have to take action against me. He never mentioned my case, he announced another picket line for about the same time as I asked people to come in front of this hotel to support me. Recognizing a union is more important to him, as it represents more dues.

—Esther Dominguez

To see an interview with Esther Dominguez: <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2009/04/16/18589605.php>

practice because it is all they know, and is why they cannot solve the problems of simple human needs. That requires a totally different way of both thinking and doing.

—Andy Phillips

Roots of GM decline

Flint, Mich.—General Motors officially sought bankruptcy protection on June 1 by filing what is known as a "Chapter 11" bankruptcy petition. That means that it will emerge from bankruptcy by selling its "viable" assets to a new corporation. GM has declared that it had \$82.3 billion in assets and \$172.8 billion in liabilities. The bankruptcy court schedule requires the sale of the viable assets to the new corporation by July 10.

The new corporation will be owned 60.8% by the U.S. government, 11.7% by the Canadian government, and 17.5% by the VEBA (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association) trust fund set up to cover healthcare expenses of GM hourly retirees (not by the UAW as is erroneously reported), with the balance of the common stock going mostly to existing bondholders.

A VEBA establishes a trust fund to provide for life, sickness, accident and other benefits. GM will have no obligation to provide healthcare benefits for retirees beginning Jan. 1, 2010.

The VEBA trust fund is also getting \$6.5 billion in preferred stock and an IOU for \$2.5 billion. The VEBA trust fund has the right to designate a member of the GM board of directors with the consent of the UAW. However, the VEBA-designated member must vote as directed by the "Independent Directors" on the board.

Although the VEBA has no real control, this arrangement pits current workers against retirees because continued payments to the VEBA trust fund only come from the surplus value extracted from the current workers. Pension benefits are not in danger, but retiree healthcare benefits will, beginning next year, depend entirely on the health of the VEBA healthcare fund.

The presence of the government is far more of a burden than a benefit to GM workers. To get the first bailout money, GM signed a "Loan and Security Agreement" with the Bush administration last Dec. 31 that required "labor modifications" in the form of "compensation reductions" and "work rule modifications" by March 31, 2009. The agreement also provided that the loan would be canceled if there was a strike.

The Obama administration did not change those conditions. On March 30 it issued a report claiming that GM had not done enough to meet the terms of the loan agreement. Among other things, GM "legacy liabilities" (pension and retiree healthcare costs) would become a serious burden in 2013. It was under this pressure that GM forced the UAW to reopen the 2007 four-year collective bargaining agreement for further concessions.

As recently as June of 2008, the *Auto Spectator* reported that GM had improved productivity consistently over 15 years, based on "The Harbour Report North America 2008." At that time total labor hours per vehicle had been reduced to 32.29, including assembly, stamping, engine and transmission manufacturing.

The perspective governing the UAW has been that of restoring GM to viability. That may not be possible, and there is no reason to believe that the relentless attack on labor will abate when GM emerges from bankruptcy. The rate of profit for all manufacturing in the U.S. has declined for many years, despite productivity gains. More accurately, it has declined **because** of productivity gains, since an ever smaller work force has to produce more and more surplus value.

—Dan

Stella D'Oro strike

Bronx, N.Y.—The Stella D'Oro bakery workers' march on May 30, from Target on W. 225th Street up Broadway to the Stella D'Oro plant on 237th Street, was the largest to date. The Stella D'Oro strike has dragged on for nine months. The Stella D'Oro Strike Support Committee has been organizing rallies. It meets every Wednesday at 7:00 PM at the Church of the Mediator, 260 West 231st St. Although union leaders have published statements and given money in support of the strikers, they have yet to mobilize their members to show up in large numbers at these marches and rallies.

The plant owners, Brynwood Partners, and the power elite in this city know that this strike has taken on great symbolic importance. The power elite is trying to convince the unions and their members that they have no choice but to bear the brunt of the economic meltdown. This is what is happening to the auto workers, but there are examples that workers will fight back, such as at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago.

New York City UFCW Local 1500 continues the effort to unionize the Agata & Valentina food store on the East Side. Factory takeovers by workers in Argentina, when that economy collapsed, show how powerful workers can be. If the Stella D'Oro workers win, it will be a clarion call to other workers to fight for their rights.

—Tom Siracuse

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: This is one of a series of Political-Philosophic Letters written by Raya Dunayevskaya during and after the 1979 Iranian Revolution. They were translated into Farsi and distributed by Iranian revolutionaries. Part II appears here. Part I appeared in the April-May News & Letters. The entire essay is at www.newsandletters.org. The whole series was published in a pamphlet, *Iran: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, and is available in the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, #7219, along with the Farsi edition, #7266.

What has happened to the Iranian revolution? Has it already run its course into its opposite, counter-revolution? Or can it be saved and deepened?

June 25, 1981

II. A look back into history and forward from the present global reality

Let's begin at the beginning, at the installation of a new power that has been so characteristic in Iran from the very first time they threw out the first Shah, at the turn of the century. It is the coalition of the clergy with genuine revolutionaries in throwing out a Shah who was tied to a foreign power—Russia, in the case of the 1906-1911 Revolution. This certainly distinguishes the Iranian clergy from priests who generally align with the reigning power. But, once a democratic Constitution was created, the clergy began burdening it with the type of amendments that restored most powers to the Shah once the foreign enemy was thrown out. That didn't keep the counter-revolution in Russia, which just crushed its own revolution, from returning to Iran and crushing that one.

THE SECOND CHAPTER of that first revolution, as the second chapter of this era's 1979 Revolution, was begun by women liberationists. Indeed, in 1906 the Iranian women were the first in the world to establish a women's *anjumen* (soviet), and their main demand was for continuing with the democracy of the Majlis. Did Bani-Sadr's call for democracy mean as much? Not quite. Though he said he was for Women's Liberation, he not only kept quiet as Khomeini moved against the movement, but set up an alternative paper, *The Muslim Woman*, edited mainly by men!

With Iraq's invasion of Iran, the war naturally became his main preoccupation. But did this mean, as the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) is insinuating, that Bani-Sadr was bringing back the hated military machine, which Khomeini and the IRP had never fully dismantled? Actions speak louder than words, and the fact is that the Army didn't follow Bani-Sadr and is now speaking out against him; in a word, they showed they know how to stick to the rulers that win.

How fantastic, then, that the abysmally opportunistic Trotskyists are so anxious to be "in" that they actually fabricated a "proletarian" ground for Bani-Sadr's ouster from his Army post:

"Those workers who have returned from the war front have tended to blame Bani-Sadr for the situation in the army and for the lack of any decisive victories in the war. They are aware of Bani-Sadr's strong base of support among the hated army command." (*Intercontinental Press*, June 22, 1981)

So strong that not a single army commander came to Bani-Sadr's defense. The Trotskyists must know the truth, but just like the Tudeh, they are so busy trying to work out a way to remain "legal" that all else takes a subordinate position. All this appears in an article, "The Drive to Oust Bani-Sadr," which opposes the ouster, at least insofar as it means "repression," especially since they know very well the repression will be directed also against them, and that their paper was among the six that were immediately shut down. That isn't the only thing repression means to the clergy. Along with the thrust against the Left will no doubt come an attempt to work out a compromise with Iraq. Let us not forget that, just as soon as the mullahs saw that Bani-Sadr was not involved in the release of the hostages, they moved to do exactly that in quite capitulatory terms. And now that Bani-Sadr is not involved with the Army, they will try to work out a deal with Iraq.

As for the Fedayeen, some factions accepted "anti-imperialism" as much at face value as did the Tudeh, as if it means only anti-U.S. and not anti-Russia—which is equally imperialistic. Indeed, Russia is still hoping that the ideological void—opened up by the fact that revolutionaries have not been armed with Marx's own Humanist, **anti-vulgar-communist**, philosophy of liberation—will create room for Russia to enter the Iranian scene.

The Mujahadeen showed themselves to be most courageous and became deeply involved in the demonstrations against Bani-Sadr's ouster, but defending Bani-Sadr against Khomeini and the IRP **must not mean uncritical support**. Which is why I showed

On the 30th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution

Iran: Revolution and counter-revolution

not only how ambivalent was Bani-Sadr's conception of democracy, of workers' control of production, of women's liberation, but that it couldn't have been otherwise once Islam came first and "socialism" came "later."

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME, historically speaking, that some theoreticians tried to dilute Marxism by a strange admixture with religion, be it U Nu's Buddhism or Ben-Gurion's Zionism;¹ whether it is Senghor's admixture of Christianity with Marxism which he calls African Socialism, or Polish Catholicism with a "new" socialism, or Islam's "Marxism." The truth is that the theocratic rush is for total power, single-party rule, single ideology, or rather single religion which is on an even deeper false consciousness than is bourgeois ideology. This whole concept of a single Leader with veto power and a direct line to "God" is not even in the mainstream of Sunni Muslims, but the theocracy established by Mohammed's son-in-law, Ali, 14 centuries ago.² The strange admixture of religion and Marxism has not worked before and will certainly not work now. For that matter, it didn't work when Sartre tried to dilute that new continent of thought and revolution—Marx's Humanism—with Existentialism.

We must under no circumstances leave out of sight the global conflict, for this is not a mere Iranian or even Middle East problem. Nor is it just a question of U.S. imperialism. There is another nuclear titan, Russia. And both of these fighting for a single world hegemony mean to have the last word. That is exactly what must not be permitted them. Thus, while Russia did not, with its invasion of Afghanistan, aim for the Gulf as the U.S. implied, Russia is certainly preparing itself to be at the ready for an opening into the region. The opening they would prefer is to gain power from **within**, and the Tudeh Party is not without successes as was shown when the commander of the so-called "Revolutionary Guards" showed his preference for that party by believing—or saying he believed—that Tudeh is a "follower of the line of the Imam."³

AS FOR U.S. IMPERIALISM, it has never given up its hunger for the oil of that region.⁴ How do you suppose it got so solid an enemy as Iraq (**and at a time when Iraq certainly had not only the whole Arab world with it, but literally the whole world in its total opposition to Israel's pre-emptive, unilateral strike against its nuclear reactor**) to work out with the UN-U.S. representative Kirkpatrick so mild a Resolution of condemnation of Israel that it didn't even ask for any concrete acts against Israel? I can't help but feel that the many double-crossing deals circulated in the UN now by the U.S. representative include one to arm Iraq in its war against Iran. After all, that's where U.S. imperialist sympathies lay in the first place when it couldn't help Iraq because Iran held the U.S. hostages. More important still, and of this there is no doubt, the Iranian Revolution so shook up the U.S. empire and its perspectives for the Gulf that even now, when the mullahs have turned away from revolution, the **irreversible fact** established by the Revolution, far from giving the U.S. any outpost there, **is non-alignment**. A hawk's eye is needed to follow the global conflict **and not sign off the Iranian Revolution**.

By way of conclusion:
The Iranian Revolution is not yet dead

The Iranian Revolution is the **one world factor** that not only U.S. and Western imperialism would like to bury. So would the Arab world with Saudi Arabia in the forefront; and China, which can see only Russia as Enemy Number One and is in the process of helping U.S. imperialism. Marxist revolutionaries must never forget their absolute opposition to capitalism, imperialism, the powers-that-be; and therefore must not in any way fall into the trap of burying the Iranian Revolution prematurely. The truth is that there are plenty of forces in Iran who made the revolution. There is the Kurdish insurgency, which has by no means been put down and will not go away with the ouster of Bani-Sadr. On the contrary, the truth is that the objective crisis has never been deeper and the masses have never suf-

1. See my Weekly Political Letter of Nov. 13, 1969, "Israel, Burma, Outer Mongolia and the Cold War."
2. See *Christian Science Monitor*, June 18, 1981, "Iran Races Toward Total Mullah Rule."
3. See *Merip Reports*, March-April, 1980.
4. See Marxist-Humanist Draft Perspectives for 1981-1982, *News & Letters*, August-September, 1981.

fered more than now. Let's not underestimate the great experience that the Iranian masses have had in overthrowing the Shah. That will not sink into the void that is being created by the mullahs. On the contrary, as the capitalists in Iran, especially the oil monopolies, will proceed with their drive for more production and lower wages, the class struggles will become stronger. Let us not underestimate the dissatisfaction of the peasantry that, after all the promises of agricultural reform, has yet to witness any redistribution of the land. Moreover, the economic conservatism of the mullahs is as deep as their political repression, as witness the Khomeini declaration: "I must tell you that during the previous dictatorial regimes, strikes and sit-ins pleased God. But now..." Khomeini then proceeded to say that the same phenomenon of strikes is now a manifestation that "the enemy is plotting against us."⁵ Furthermore, let us not forget that Khomeini's early opposition to the Shah was so feudalistic as even to oppose the mild so-called "White Revolution" because he wanted no disturbance of the feudal relations on the land.

IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARIES ARE EXPERIENCED in underground activities. Iranian revolutionaries knew how not to give up their arms when the IRP first demanded it. The Women's Liberation Movement, like labor, like the national minorities, like the youth, have begun a chapter of the revolution they still mean to finish.

Put succinctly, the Iranian Revolution is not yet dead, not by a long shot. New revolutionary forces—from the proletariat to the peasantry; from the minorities, especially the Kurds, hungry for self-determination, to the Women's Liberation Movement; from revolutionary intellectuals fighting for freedom of the press to the youth who have always been the vanguard in the revolution—are bound to unfold new powers against their own ruling class and not allow it to remain only opposition to the foreign enemy. All these forces can merge into full civil war, this time armed with a philosophy of revolution that would initiate the road to a classless society on truly new humanist beginnings. The Iranian Revolution has not yet run its course. The Iranian masses have not had their last word.

Let us keep our eyes open and have our international solidarity at the ready. —**Raya Dunayevskaya**
Detroit, Michigan

P.S. June 28, 1981. In the three days between writing the letter above and its mimeography, the news comes that the IRP headquarters has been blown up, and included in the carnage is the death of Beheshti. No doubt the IRP will now blame Bani-Sadr, who has never indulged in any terrorist act, but whom they dared characterize as "an agent of American imperialism." In truth, however, the terror that will be unleashed will not be against American imperialism but against the Iranian Left. At the same time, the terrorist acts perpetrated by the extreme right, who consider themselves the "purest" because they insist the mullahs should not engage in politics, have been covered over. Whatever chaos results now, it will not in any way change the analysis made above, and above all the need for international solidarity with the true Iranian revolution.

5. See V.S. Naipaul's "Among Believers: An Islamic Journey," *Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1981.

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ESSAY

Gaza drowned in silence, despair and anguish

by Raha

Gaza appears to have drowned in silence for now. It has all but vanished from the headlines. Not even Obama's speech in Cairo made mention of it. Amid the devastation and mass graves, with orphans roaming the streets for food, the Palestinians, in shock and disbelief, continue to ask: "Why?" and "How can we explain this to children?" This, they cry, was "a war of extermination."¹

The gruesome scenes and the heinous crimes of Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldiers have begun to generate outrage within Israel. Testimonies, partially revealed and printed in *Haaretz*, confirm the accounts given by Palestinians. Not only the bulldozing of homes with live civilians inside waving white flags, but certain unspeakable and obscene acts committed by IDF troops, point to an ominous development. Here is how a *Guardian* reporter described it:

"But most disturbing of all was the graffiti they daubed on the walls... 'Arabs need 2 die,' 'Die you all,'... '1 is down, 999,999 to go,' and scrawled on an image of a gravestone the words: 'Arabs 1948-2009.'"² *Haaretz* also reports an IDF commander confessing, "The lives of Palestinians, let's say, is something very, very less important than the lives of our soldiers."³

'AT THE MIND'S LIMIT'

In Gaza the drive toward the total domination of Palestinians reached its apogee. That the "Operation Cast Lead" was militarily planned for months in advance is not a secret. What is not as well known, however, is that conceptually this was no mere military adventure but an attempt at a whole new experiment. In fact, as far back as March 2008, the Deputy Defense Minister, Matan Vilani, had warned that "The more Qassam fire intensifies and the rockets reach a longer range, they will bring upon themselves a bigger holocaust [Shoah]..."⁴

Even Shimon Peres of the Labor Party, who, in 2002, opposed the ultra-right Avigdor Lieberman for advocating collective punishment, came out in support of the assault in order "to provide a strong blow to the people of Gaza so that they would lose their appetite for shooting at Israel."⁵ It appears that a new consensus has been reached among all the ruling factions in Israel that, in the words of IDF chief of staff, Moshe Ya'alom, "The Palestinians must be made to understand in the deepest recesses of their consciousness that they are a defeated people."

Will Jews, inside and outside of Israel, permit their leaders to imitate their former tormentors? Do these rulers wish to drive down the Palestinians to the state of bare existential survival and submerged endurance? Did the "1000-year Reich" succeed at "de-subjectifying" the Jewish masses by destroying their capacity for resistance, their will to freedom? Despair and anguish appear simultaneously as different forms of the same consciousness under domination and captivity. No people know this better than the historical Jews, whether under the Romans or the Nazis.

No one has illuminated this state of despair better than Hegel. Referring to the Jews under the Roman and the Syrian Kings, he points to "despair at reality" as what brings one in touch with "a universal dimension of human existence, which they could not deny, but which nonetheless is a completely spiritless universality."⁶ Despair, therefore, signifies the active presence of a cleavage within the subject. When the subject becomes aware of this contradiction, she undergoes anguish. Anguish is present where "there is opposition to what ought to be. Anguish is precisely the element of negativity in the affirmative, meaning that within itself the affirmative is self-contradictory and wounded." (pp. 305-306) "Mind and its world are thus both alike lost and plunged in the infinite grief of that fate for which a people, the Jewish people, was held in readiness. Mind is here pressed back upon itself in the extreme of its absolute negativity."⁷ This is a demand for reconciliation, which can be "only reconciliation

with the truth."⁸ Truth here means that what is taken as objective is not something alien. "Reconciliation consequently is freedom and it is not something quiescent, rather it is activity, the movement that makes the estrangement disappear." (p. 172)

In this regard, Palestinians too have proven that they are resilient people. Their intense yearning for self-determination, even under decades of occupation, has not diminished. In this, they resemble their Jewish "brethren." However, if there was one thing that they should learn from the Jews, even if negatively, it would be: What happens after you gain a mind of your own and become independent? This is a turning point in the movement of freedom. Because getting a mind of your own is not yet the mastery over the estranged world, you will either go further, suffering new negotiations, or retrogress. Herein lies the greater tragedy of what has happened to Israel of "Exodus" from the death camps of Auschwitz, the Israel of ferocious and successful anti-

British struggles to the Israel of today as an imperialist Goliath!

"After Gaza," there is a whole new sense of reality among the growing opposition in Israel—from all the outpouring of massive demonstrations against the war to all the Jewish human rights groups, from the Rabbis who prayed for the Palestinian children to the joint Jewish-Palestinian groups, especially the women.⁹



A girl in Gaza surveys the aftermath of bombardment by Israeli forces

They dared express solidarity with Palestinians and refused to regard them as "the enemy." And they did so under the most suffocating conditions.

CONTRADICTIONS AT ISRAEL'S BIRTH

We begin directly from the period 1945-47, from the liberation of the concentration camps and the creation of masses of Jewish refugees when no country, including the U.S. and Britain, would take them in. No sooner did the refugees reach Palestine, than they had to plunge into a new struggle, this time primarily against the British imperial power, now, however, with the consciousness of self as independent. No one could deprive them of this newfound sense of liberation. The Concentration Camp, after all, was the birthplace of the idea of freedom. It was through the Ghetto uprisings, the gas chambers, a veritable life and death struggle, that the Jew as Subject was born.

This is a critical period when we see a great diversity of tendencies, both international and indigenous, whose ideas had grown roots among the masses, rise to prominence—from Socialists to agrarian Narodniki, to "proletarian" Zionists, all aspiring for a new society. Without a doubt, the idea of a non-capitalist road to socialism, whether through urban cooperatives or the village communes, *kibbutzim*, was the most prevalent.

Martin Buber, the great Jewish philosopher and proponent of "Hebrew Humanism," records in his *Paths to Utopia* a most serious dialogue among the advocates of agrarian communes. Buber makes reference to the fact that they were debating Marx's response to Russian revolutionary Vera Zasulich, to whom Marx wrote that the archaic Russian village communes could serve as ground for a socialist development. They had then traced Marx's view of the cooperatives from the 1840s to the Paris Commune of 1871. When dealing with Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program*, they took "sides" with Marx against Ferdinand Lassalle's appeal for government aid in setting up and sustaining the cooperatives.

But they wanted to set up these communes, apparently without a revolutionary transformation of the society at large. The core of their effort was devoted to preserving the communes, creating a federation of the communes, and minimizing external influences. Marx, however, held that the Russian communes' development could not be separated from the world context or from Russian society as a whole.¹⁰ While the agrarian Israeli communalists were hard at work trying to realize their ideas, the larger context, the urban development, the political revolution taking place all around them, very nearly escaped them.

What prevailed in Palestine as a whole was not Marx but Lassalle's "practical" idea of setting up urban cooperatives and preserving them with the help of the state. It was Lassalle's views that were being serialized

and published in Socialist papers. This was the beginning of the end of *kibbutzim* as a socialist experiment. The diaspora's elite interjected themselves directly into the internal dynamics of Palestine. Congregated in Europe, under the umbrella of the Jewish Agency, composed, mainly, of religious, nationalist and Labor Socialists, they overtook the indigenous movement, even as they were recognized as the legitimate authority for bargaining by the big powers.

Here is how Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism, summed up the situation: "Methodologically as well as practically, the point here is that we could—and did—express the contradictions at its birth. We refused to be silent even when we most enthusiastically supported the establishment of 'a homeland for the Jews,' by pointing sharply to the fact that the land contained the presence—as a minority, it is true, but a presence, nevertheless—of the reactionary Irgun, whose leader was the terrorist, [Menachem] Begin."¹¹

Raya Dunayevskaya recalls that back in 1947, when she was in Paris and London, she met "quite a few German Jews who had escaped the Holocaust, were happy to reach Palestine, only to find conditions there—both the hostility of Arabs and of religious Zionists—unbearable. The stories they told were not only about the bombing of the King David Hotel, but Irgun terrorist acts against individual Jews who were struggling to found a socialist republic, as well as pressures exerted also against moderate Zionists—and the young left Polazionists—for attempting to work also with Arabs."¹²

THE 1948 DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

UN Resolution 181 called for the partition of Palestine, with provisions to link the two entities economically and politically. This created a tremendous backlash among all Arab states and set the stage for a civil war. No Palestinian declaration of independence ever came about. Instead Arab leaders called for the disastrous mass exodus of Arabs from the mixed areas.

The text of Israel's Declaration drafted by Ben-Gurion was a grand bargain with religious Zionists that laid the foundation for a theocratic state. The duality in the document was between full citizenship for all the inhabitants of the new state and the creation of a Hebrew Nation. More importantly, the Declaration called for the formation of a "constituent assembly" to draft a constitution. Neither the assembly nor the constitution ever came to be. It was left to the political elites whether or not to follow through on all other provisions of Resolution 181.

Nevertheless, the Labor Party remained in power for nearly three decades, until the rise of the Irgun leader, Begin, in 1977. This was a turning point in the transformation of Israel. Now Begin could rewrite the history, calling his terrorist beginnings "anti-colonial." What was a fanatical and marginal tendency was now in power, transforming their reactionary ideology into official state policy. They have pushed Israel further and further toward religious fundamentalism.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

What began as a political revolution against imperialism and contained a multifaceted social content, changed the face of the Middle East. Even Egypt's Nasser, when he was concerned with revolution against colonialism and feudal monarchy, was inspired by it. The founding of Israel ushered in the birth of a new consciousness, that of Palestinians for self-determination. What ensued was the ever deepening tension between two contending national identities.

The near total rejection by the Arab states of Jews' rights for self-determination, and the subsequent wars unleashed against Israel, not only undermined the character of the Palestinian national liberation movement, but constantly reminded the Jews that their very survival as a people was at stake. Having nearly perished under the Nazi Holocaust, they were not about to take this existential threat lightly. The preservation of the state of Israel became the unifying force that truncated the self-development of society, including the powerful trade unions and the communal settlements. On the other hand, once terrorism emerged within the Palestinian movement as an acceptable form of "resistance," it helped pave the way for the most degenerate elements within both societies to come to dominance.

For the Palestinian movement to regain its status as a truly liberatory movement, it must renounce terrorism unequivocally, and focus on what it is for, especially the day after it achieves independence. For Israel to begin regenerating itself on the path of social renewal, it must completely renounce occupation and military domination of the Palestinians. The burden on Israel is much greater, for they did come oh so close to social revolution and yet allowed themselves to degenerate into a state-capitalist country whose mode of operation is the exploitation of alienated labor, whether Jewish or Arab. They must regain their footing by recollecting the high points of their revolutionary movement for a new social revolution.

1. "The Palestinians say: 'This is a war of extermination,'" *Guardian*, 1/17/2009.
2. "Amid dust and death, a family's story speaks for the terror of war," *Guardian*, 1/19/2009.
3. "'Shooting and crying,'" *Haaretz*, 4/28/09.
4. "Israel threatens to unleash 'holocaust' in Gaza," *Times Online*, 3/1/08.
5. "Israel wanted a humanitarian crisis," *Times Online*, 1/20/09.
6. Hegel, *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. III, p. 117.
7. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 222.

8. Hegel, *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. III, p. 296.
9. See "Leading drive for peace in Middle East," *News & Letters*, Feb.-March. 2009.
10. For an extensive and in-depth discussion of this topic, see Raya Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, Chapter XII, pp. 180-188.

11. *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East*, "Down with the perpetrators of the Palestinian slaughter," 9/19/1982, p. 26.
12. *The Political-Philosophic Letters of Raya Dunayevskaya*, 1/5/82.

MARXIST-HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES FOR 2009-2010: CRISES COMPEL RETURN TO MARXISM OF MARX

When the U.S. sneezes, we here take out the Kleenex. Canada is very aware of U.S. activities/presidents. These are interesting times, the U.S. is no longer the center of the universe. I lived through the depression in the 1930s, your Hoover and then New Deal Roosevelt. We didn't come out of it until the war. I think we are very close to those times again, but with the means to organize and get the word out—not just street demonstrations, but email, facebook, and the like—I do not think the massive disaster of then will be repeated. The powers that be will see to that. For instance, here, where we have employment insurance, the number of entitlement weeks are being extended. We also have universal healthcare and I can see the U.S. is going to do something, if not similar, at least an improvement on what has been.

I disagree with your Perspectives thesis (*N&L* April-May 2009) that the crisis compels a return to Marx. Would that it were so. The war pulled us out of the 1930s, and don't ever kid yourself, a lot of lessons were learned, i.e., don't go back to soup kitchens and relief camps.

As a stop-gap measure, I sometimes think there should be a demand for a "Ten Times Society" where the top earner is paid no more than 10 times the bottom layer. That would be seen as equitable and fair, and not as scary as something totally different. In short, I am much more pessimistic than your headline "Crisis compels return to Marx."

**Canadian Correspondent
Vancouver**

Your Lead article, "Crisis compels return to Marx," (*N&L*, April-May 2009) was well and bravely put. This is a country where Marx is a four-letter

word, albeit everywhere else it is recognized that his critique of capitalism is the best there has ever been. Capitalism simply does not work, and visibly does not work. It is a corpse even Jesus could not revive. By wearing the straitjacket of capitalism, President Obama has seriously self-limited his options and has concluded in advance never to think outside the box.

Americans who want to see our future need only take a week off, go to Haiti and look around. Scary? It's a searing indictment as to where raw capitalism leads, a preview of Coming Attractions/Distractions. The people of Haiti have heard that "capitalism will save us" song and dance for 200 years. You have only to go and see for yourself.

This country is in desperate need of a strong dose of Marxist analysis. For those *N&L* readers who have trouble getting a handle on U.S. capitalism, it is well to note that when George Bush was sworn in as President, he took an oath to uphold and defend legalized slavery: the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which prohibits "involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for a crime." Barack Obama took that same oath. So what is the difference between a capitalist and a capitalist?

One of the fascinating things so far is that the Obama administration has adopted, in part, a state capitalism (Stalinism) that Raya Dunayevskaya described and denounced for much of her life. She and her works could not be more relevant than today.

**R. Zani
Texas**

I noted with interest that you had listed, in the Perspectives for 2009-2010, a plan to "mark the 2010 centenary of the birth of Raya Dunayevskaya with

LEON DESPRES — A LIFETIME OF BATTLES FOR HUMANITY

Leon Despres was a remarkable human being—a lawyer who tried to keep those he represented "out of the courts" whenever possible to allow reasonable human relations to work out the solution needed; a legendary figure in Chicago politics, who brought wisdom along with extraordinary legal knowledge to the battles with the city's rulers for which he was famous.

The outpouring of admiration in the press for this renowned figure, when his death was reported in May, soon after he had celebrated his 101st birthday, was not only for his exceptional energy and sharpness of mind and wit right up to that day, but for the lasting impact he had on the city of Chicago and far beyond. The countless tributes that filled pages in the papers recounted in detail the wars he waged with Mayor Richard J. Daley that were woven into the historic fabric of Chicago, describing the way Daley was driven more than once to end the battle by simply cutting off Despres' microphone. They recount the way—in the 20 years from 1955 through 1975, when he fought those wars as the 5th Ward alderman from Hyde Park, most often completely alone—that he lost more battles than he won but still succeeded in opening the door to the mayor's office to African Americans. They will note that he kept up the fight against discrimination so adamantly, even when Black aldermen tied to the Daley machine declined to stand with him, that he was called "the only Negro on the City Council."

Many an "In Memoriam" noted his marching with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and chartering a plane to take 184 others with him to participate in the 1965 Selma to Montgomery, Alabama march. Some even noted that he and his wife, Marian, were the ones asked

by Leon Trotsky's supporters to take a suitcase of clothes to Trotsky because he and Natalia had literally nothing when they had been given a haven in Mexico after their exile by Stalin. What the reports do not note is that throughout his life Despres called that meeting with Trotsky his proudest moment.

Although he was far from being a "Trotskyite," like many others he vigorously supported the investigation of the infamous "Moscow Trials" by the Dewey Commission into the false charges against Trotsky.

Although all these are among the many reasons News and Letters Committees holds Leon Despres in high esteem, there was a very special relationship between them

that demands being acknowledged. It began when N&LC moved from Detroit to Chicago in 1984 and Raya Dunayevskaya sought his advice on how to "set up shop" in a new state. Leon Despres chose her as much as she chose him to be her legal counsel, for a relationship that continued between him and N&LC to the end of his long and vibrant life. It can be summed up in the way he declared, as he re-studied the N&LC Constitution anew over 20 years later, that it was an "amazing document in its uniqueness and continuing richness." He was there to share his advice and help, whether any legal case was involved or not, throughout all those years.

There have been many beneficiaries of the wisdom Leon Despres had achieved through a lifetime of struggles for dignity and respect. It is why Chicago headlines noted his passing by calling him the "conscience of the City." More directly, it is why N&LC so deeply mourns his passing and so highly honors the special relationship it was our great good fortune to have had.

Oliga Domanski



Leon Despres speaks at Haymarket Square.

READERS' VIEWS

forums and publications drawing attention to her Marxist-Humanist body of ideas as indispensable for forging the missing link between philosophy and revolution." There will certainly be an enormous number of discoveries she made about Marx, to be celebrated in that centenary. They will make clear why *N&L* has been so determined to specify the difference between the Marxism of Marx and what "post-Marx Marxism" has passed off as "Marxism"—beginning, as Dunayevskaya insisted, with Engels himself. I look forward to the forums I trust you will make sure to let your readers know about throughout the year ahead.

**Marxist-Humanist
Philadelphia**

GREEN COLLAR ECONOMY

In his review of Van Jones' *The Green Collar Economy* in the April-May issue of *N&L*, D. Cheneville really captures the tragic silliness of thinking capitalism is the solution to the problems it creates. Jones seems to advocate the tactic of using capitalism before it uses you as expressed by Oakland hip hop artist DNok at a Silence the Violence forum earlier this year. The missed point is that someone will get used.

These brothers are serious about taking matters into their own hands and immersing themselves in the project of street-smart self-determination.

But when capitalism is the methodology there is a dangerously thin line between "Be the change you want to see" and "Stop me before I kill again."

**Reader
Oakland**

SNOWBALLING LABOR MOVEMENTS

In order to get California Senator Dianne Feinstein's attention so that she will act to support the Employee Free Choice Act (card check-off and other rights), a group of workers, some from the San Francisco Labor Council, and some religious groups, held a two-day hunger strike at a high profile corner in San Francisco starting June 3. We heard stories of harassment, firings, free speech violations, and intimidation. Hotel and restaurant workers had especially harsh experiences to tell of. The hunger strike ended early, as people from Feinstein's office finally agreed to talk to the union supporters, though whether Senator Feinstein will move on the measure is not yet certain.

No more than 30 yards away, there was another action at the same time by Wells Fargo contract workers, who leafleted and talked to people in front of the bank's Main Branch. The movement for unions is snowballing in the San Francisco area and elsewhere in California. Spirits are high. Workers have been pushed down for years and it is time to turn that around.

**Union Supporter
San Francisco**

In downtown Los Angeles members of Carpenters Local 1506 are holding a large banner daily, reading "Labor Dispute! Shame on Hagens Berman." Their flyer explains that Hagens Berman Sobol Shapiro LLP, through general contractor Hansji Urban, Inc., hired nonunion subcontractor N U Enterprise to work on a Hagens Berman office project in Phoenix. By hiring N U the area's labor standards (wages and benefits) were not met. The flyer cited a Sept. 3, 2008, Judgment and Order, where the California Attorney General forced the owner of N U Enterprise to pay over \$1.6 million for cheating workers out of wages and benefits.

The union asks supporters to call

Steve Berman, at (206) 623-7292, to see that area labor standards are met on any projects they are involved in.

**Labor activist
Los Angeles**

ADDING UP THE UNEMPLOYED

We read that we need to create at least 24 million new jobs in the U.S. At present, 12.5 million workers are "officially" unemployed, 10.5 million are underemployed with sub-livable wages, and at least 4 million have given up looking and are not even counted in the statistics. That adds up to 27 million workers (16.7%) and the numbers are rising daily. President Obama's solution to stimulate the economy by creating or saving 3 million jobs is a non-solution.

As Raya Dunayevskaya stated in her 1986 article on "Capitalist Production/Alienated Labor" (printed in the Oct.-Nov. 2008 *N&L*), under capitalism more and more capital is invested in dead labor (machines) and less and less in alienated human labor. The capitalists try to raise the resulting lower rate of profit by lowering wages but they are creating no jobs or products. This cycle is what has now reached meltdown.

**Reader
Los Angeles**

LEBANON'S ELECTIONS

Parliamentary elections in Lebanon ended with the governing March 14 coalition returning with a slightly increased majority of 71 seats, as compared to 57 for the rival March 8 coalition made up of Hezbollah and its allies. The results are a repudiation of Hezbollah's attacks of May 7, 2008, upon opposing political factions, which raised the specter of renewed civil war. The group's weapons, which it claims are purely for defense against Israel, were seen to be directed closer to home.

While significant as a rejection of violence, the results leave many questions open. The mandate of the Doha Conference, which gave a one-third veto power to Hezbollah and its allies, has expired and it remains to be seen whether there will be pressure to reinstate that one fruit of the May 7 attacks. The people of Lebanon have no desire to fight another war with Israel, and even less another civil war.

**Observer
Chicago**

One analyst said, "Lebanon's voters gave the White House the victory it wanted—with a lot of help from Hezbollah." I wonder, was it Obama's Cairo speech beseeching "moderation" and "pragmatism"? Or was it the millions in campaign funds bankrolled by Saudi Arabia for a fellow Sunni candidate in Lebanon? Whatever the case, it seems the Arab extremists are put in their place. If only something similar were also to happen in Israel to put Netanyahu in his place.

**Another analyst
California**

TEACHERS FOR STRIKERS

A welcome sight at the rally for the striking Stella D'Oro workers were numerous supporters from teachers' unions, both urban and suburban. Everywhere school systems are holding teachers "accountable" for student performance on standardized tests. At the same time, teachers are laid off, which increases class size and means that more and more teachers have to teach outside their subject areas. And almost unrecognized is the effect of cuts in other school staff—the unsung heroes of education. When a district cuts counselors, aides

to special education teachers, custodians and "lunch ladies," students are deprived of that many more caring adults, with those left to do the job stressed to the max. Those who came out to support the Stella D'Oro workers recognized that workplace abuses hurt the entire community, whether it is a school or a factory that previously provided decent jobs for their students' parents.

Susan Van Gelder
New York

THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION
30 YEARS LATER

The article by Raya Dunayevskaya in her "From the Archives" column (April-May 2009 *N&L*) was written almost 30 years ago on the process in which Bani-Sadr was driven out of power despite having won 75% of the people's vote. Now, people are using Mir Hossein Mousavi's campaign to wage their struggle and voice their aspiration for full-fledged freedom. What is important to remember is that Freedom is not just a philosophic concept but a real human need that people are fighting for. Are Marxists listening to this voice for freedom, or are they caught in the election analysis and shy to act because Ahmadinejad is spewing "anti-imperialist" rhetoric?

Mansour
Los Angeles

REMEMBERING RICHARD PEGUE :
MOVEMENT DJ AND SONGWRITER

Chicago disc jockey and songwriter Richard Pegue died March 3 after suffering a fatal heart attack at the age of 65. Pegue began his music career at Hirsch High School on the South Side of Chicago, where he graduated in 1961. At the time, he was a member of a doo-wop group and they recorded a single on the legendary Chess records. Pegue later earned his degree in broadcasting at Columbia College and went on to write a tune called "I'm Not Ready To Settle Down" for Little Ben and the Cheers. Pegue started his career as a guest dj on WVON in 1968 and became pro-

gram director at various stations including WVON, WGCI FM and AM, WOPA, WJPC. In 1969 he began his regular dusty (oldies) program featuring mostly rhythm and blues, jazz, blues and a little taste of gospel. In 1969 Pegue wrote a political Black power movement song, "Nobody Gonna Turn Us Round," released when Chicago Black Panther activists Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were assassinated. At the time the tune was heavily exposed on WVON and WGRT. At the time of his passing, Pegue wrote columns for the local *StreetWise* newspaper and a Chicago South Side publication *The Crusader*.

Darrell G.
Chicago

ELECTIONS IN INDIA

We have just finished the general elections in India. Everything was absolutely paralyzed for nearly one month. There is a very strong Maoist group who were against the elections and spread that "whoever goes to vote, his/her height will be diminished" (= they will cut their heads off). Therefore, many people, especially indigenous, did not vote. The Maoists are very violent and we have continuous strikes, during which offices and schools, transport and shops are closed out of fear. And they are increasing their power. Actually, there is a "corridor" from Nepal to Sri Lanka. You can never know who are the members of these groups. The party of Sonia Gandhi that won the elections is much better than BJP, which won the elections in our area and wants to make all India Hindu.

Pilar
Jharkhand, India

CORRECTION

Our thanks to readers who pointed out that the article on the "Death of John Karnei" misspelled his name in the headline. We also put the wrong date for the day of his death. It was Jan. 5. We regret the errors which we corrected immediately on www.newsandletters.org.

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

In reading through the perspectives theses over the past 11 years, I often thought there was a bit of overkill with regard to what was shared. All the theory was discussed in relation to world events, but it often seemed unwieldy to read, and as a result, to really understand unless you were an insider to N&LC.

One of the things that I really appreciated in this year's perspectives was a simple definition that "The most urgent of our tasks this year is the culmination of all our work...in projection and development of new relationships as membership growth to help in carrying out our tasks on the pathway to revolution and the establishment of a new, truly human world." That goal creates a compelling and poignant argument for the changes that N&LC have gone through over the past several years, so that the organization could be a truly inclusive entity.

This year's perspectives thesis is perhaps more universally informative about capitalist world affairs than any in the past. What I appreciate is that there is no boilerplate "okay we need to blindly return to Marxist thought to solve all the world's ills," but rather, a question of "what kind of return would best serve the changing dynamics of today's world."

One of the ironies of trying to discuss Marxist-Humanism with people was educating them first that Marxism was not Communism, a theory that even well-educated persons tended to hold onto. It was confounding and stodgy for one who was not well versed in Hegel, Marx, or others.

This year N&LC got it right, and the responses that I got back from several who have read the perspectives has been one of complete understanding. What most—me included—like is that Obama is not getting a free pass. Despite his significance as a history-making individual, there is a sense that the convoluted policies of this nation, and capitalism in

general, may transcend the power of one man to change, even with the resources of the West behind him, simply because, despite his heritage, he still represents the largest capitalist enterprise in the world.

Another aspect of the perspectives that I particularly appreciated was the concept of needing to build upon Raya's ideas rather than trying to egotistically rewrite the doctrine. I like the direction of applying her thoughts to the concept of living today, instead of trying to reinvent the wheel; of attaching our cart to the wheels of change already put into motion by Raya. It allows people to climb aboard and ride to true change through a viable and conducive revolutionary dialogue that takes their opinions, ideas, and differences into account.

The need for *N&L*, as not only a news source but as a vehicle to publish the perspectives, is witnessed by its ability to share Marxist-Humanist dialogue with persons who do not have access to the internet or to the treatises discussed within the publication.

One thing I would like to see sometime in the future is to have new ideas come online to further Raya's goals for a new generation of thinkers to build upon her thoughts and storm the barricades of fundamentalist capitalism, racism, gender and class struggles. How would the rank and file—the average person on the streets—evaluate Raya's thoughts as they understand them?

There is always room for change and improvement and it will be interesting to watch how the new stewardship of N&LC moves forward to ensure that the perspectives, ideas, and goals are met and exceeded. For the first time since the late 1990s, reading *News & Letters* and thinking about the goals of N&LC is exciting again...and that is what change (real change) should be about.

Robert Taliaferro
Wisconsin



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Slow success story at At-Tuwani, Palestine

Editor's note: Human rights worker Ceylon Mooney spent this past winter with Christian Peacemaker Teams in the village of At-Tuwani in the South Hebron Hills. It was his fourth trip to Palestine to support Palestinian nonviolent resistance to the Israeli occupation.

At-Tuwani—Typically I wake up at 6:30 am to watch the Israeli army escort Palestinian children on their way to school. After breakfast, I accompany local Palestinian shepherds as they take their sheep and goats out to graze, just as their fathers, grandfathers and ancestors have done for generations. If it weren't for the constant roar of the F-16's overhead, I might forget why I'm here and soak up the austere beauty of this dry area's thorny brush, rolling hills and seemingly endless blue sky.

RESISTING SETTLEMENT EXPANSION

Many At-Tuwani families have been here for hundreds, if not thousands, of years; others arrived during the creation of Israel in 1947-1949, a time known to the native Palestinians as "al Nakba," the catastrophe. Israel's colonization of this land continues to this day. There are more than 200 Jewish-only colonies (called "settlements") throughout the West Bank, most of them built well after the 1949 armistice. Everywhere I see new construction and settlement expansion. In 1981 Israel created the Ma'on settlement on land belonging to At-Tuwani families. In 1997, the Israeli army forcibly removed many residents of two nearby villages to build the Havat Ma'on colony. Many have returned and now refuse to leave.

The steadfastness of Palestinians to maintain what lands they still possess is part of an ongoing campaign of nonviolent resistance. Israeli and international peace activists assist this struggle. In 2004 villagers in the area I am working in invited the Christian Peacemaker Teams and Operation Dove to witness and support their nonviolent struggle.

The internationals' job is to accompany farmers and shepherds accessing their lands. Because of frequent settler attacks on schoolchildren, we were also invited to accompany the kids on their way to school. Settlers attacked the international peace activists, hospitalizing two groups in September and October 2004. Because internationals were injured, the everyday violence used against Palestinians was suddenly visible, and the Israeli government ordered the army and the police to escort the children to school. Now we monitor the army escort.

I see that the native Palestinians in this area are winning. In 1997, when the villages here were cleared out, many families moved to nearby Yatta. Now families are moving back and fields that have not been plowed in years are being plowed; shepherds are grazing their

sheep on lands that, until recently, they hadn't been able to access. Slowly, there is a success story in the works.

Israel, the U.S. and too many other countries expect the Palestinians to accept whatever violence is imposed upon them without a reaction, much less a violent reaction. This is absurd. In the face of such loss of land, livelihood, life and lifestyle, how could one not expect a reaction? If we expect Israel to react to the killing of 28 Israelis since 2001 by Palestinian rockets and mortars, how can we not expect Palestinians to react to the killing of 1,300 mostly civilian Gazans—over 300 of them children? Didn't these people have families, too? Don't Palestinian mothers and fathers love their children like Israeli parents do?

NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE FLOURISHES

The international community cannot continue to ignore common sense, and people in the U.S. cannot afford to bankroll a conflict that is destroying both societies. We cannot ignore a legitimate struggle for sovereignty and self-determination of a native people who insist on living their own lives on their own homelands. Our eyes are open to gun-wielding militiamen, but not to the bigger picture, not to the rest of the story. I have been all over Palestine, and I see this struggle every day. With the coming of much-needed rain, I look around and see that nonviolent resistance, like the land here, is fertile.

Third World warriors

Berkeley, Cal.—Recently the freedom movement lost two champions of ethnic diversity and social justice. On March 15 Richard Aoki succumbed to numerous ailments. On May 26 Ronald Takaki took his own life after a 15-year struggle with multiple sclerosis. Both were 70 years old and both were Sansei (third generation Japanese American). Takaki was born and raised in Hawaii, Aoki in the East Bay. Aoki and his family spent World War II in an internment camp at Topaz, Utah.

Takaki, after teaching Black History at UCLA, came to University of California at Berkeley (UCB), where he developed the first ethnic studies doctoral program in the U.S. The UCB Ethnic Studies Department grew out of the 1969 Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) strike of which Richard Aoki was a key organizer.

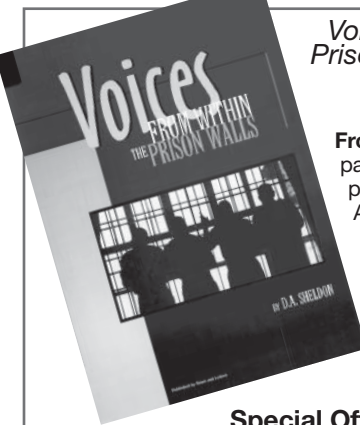
In 1966 Aoki arrived at UCB fresh from Merritt Community College, where he had helped found the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense with Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. He didn't run with them in his childhood but he grew up in the same West and North Oakland neighborhoods. He balked at joining the Panthers until Newton told him, "As far as I'm concerned, you Black."

Aoki became a founding member of the Asian American Political Alliance, which worked with Black, Latino and Native American groups to organize a massive student strike demanding an autonomous Third World College at UCB. A veteran of the strike recalled it was Aoki who came up with the idea of solidarizing with unionized workers on campus. Many had kids in college. When they refused to cross picket lines, the campus was shut down for the first time in history. It took another first to open it back up: then-Governor Ronald Reagan calling out the National Guard.

After a record 90 days of bloody confrontation with authorities and millions of dollars in damage, the strikers settled for an ethnic studies department. While that was regarded as something of a compromise in 1969, today the diversity in both the student body and curricula attests to the historic import of the TWLF strike.

Perhaps that's why years ago Richard Aoki said to me, "I got one word for you: program." If by program he meant concretized ideas that enrich the meaning of being human, I take his word as wise counsel. I'm reminded of a televised debate in which Ron Takaki defended UCB's policy of requiring undergraduates to pass a course on the contributions of ethnic minorities. When his opponent expressed concern that academic standards were being lowered, Takaki replied, "Who's lowering standards? I'm talking about raising them."

—David M'Otto



Voices From Within the Prison Walls
by D.A. Sheldon

From the Introduction: "This pamphlet is written by a prisoner who experienced America's hell-holes first hand. Out of a three-year process of discussion with other prisoners came the wealth of factual and human material found in this pamphlet."

Special Offer: Pamphlet price \$8. For \$10 receive the pamphlet AND a year's subscription to *News & Letters*. See ad p. 7 and mention this special offer.

Fighting her family's eviction



Berkeley, Cal.—Tosha Alberta (right) fights to prevent the police from evicting her and her children. She said, "We are going to stop the violence. We had the first action last Thursday, which was successful in keeping the police from evicting me. We are fighting to stay here. This home is all we know. We made a proposal to the bank and we are waiting to hear from them. The federal government is giving money to the banks, but the banks are not changing their behavior."

BLACK/REDVIEW

continued from p. 1

Thus, racism has long played a role in U.S. politics, and at times that role has been crucial in determining the direction of U.S. history. We need not go very far back in history to find the connection between U.S. politics and racism. Many contentious social issues, such as welfare "reform," building larger and tougher prisons, mandatory minimum prison sentences, "three strikes" laws, prosecuting youth as adults and putting them in adult prisons (see "Efren Paredes update," this page), and the extension of the death penalty to more offenses are all motivated by an ideology of racism.

Beginning with President Ronald Reagan, every administration, including the administration of William Jefferson Clinton, has acted politically to roll back the gains of the Civil Rights Movement and to destroy the very idea of such a movement. Clinton, the "New Democrat," attempted only morally to separate himself from reactionaries like Reagan and Bush.

Clinton went to an African-American church in Memphis, Tenn., to tell African-American religious leaders that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., would not like the way African-American youth were killing each other and having babies out of wedlock. He went on to say: "We will turn this around. We will give these children a future. We will take away their guns and give them books. We will take away their despair and give them hope. We will rebuild the families and neighborhoods and the communities."

We know this kind of political evangelism is a sham. What African-American youth got during the eight years of Clinton's administration was welfare "reform," new prisons and longer prison terms. According to recent reports there are over two million Americans in federal and state prisons and local jails in this country. More than half are African-American men and women. Thus, one out of every 35 African Americans is behind bars, representing the racial segregation of capitalism's permanently unemployed Black so-called underclass.

AN UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

The post-Civil Rights Movement era is an ongoing era of an unfinished revolution. The social conditions created by racism and poverty are still deep in this American civilization. In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., stood at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., and addressed one quarter of a million people. He told them that, 100 years after Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans were still not free. He said, "The Negro is still badly crippled by the manacles of segregation and chains of discrimination, [he still lives] on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity."

Martin Luther King III recently stood on the same spot and said, "The day my father had dreamed about has not yet been realized." Clearly, African-American freedom cannot be gained through bourgeois politics. A new wave of struggle will have to break through this barrier, not by avoiding politics, but by transcending political alienation through full confidence in the masses' own social power. New leaders cannot be mere politicians, but have to enhance this social power and help it coalesce with others in the fight against globalized capital. Only through this social power can we reach a humanism that transcends capitalism and the racism it continually re-creates.

Free Efrén Paredes!

Efrén Paredes, age 15, was wrongfully convicted of murder and sentenced to three life terms without parole. As a youth, who needed time to mourn the murder of a good friend and mentor, he scrambled to defend himself in a system completely foreign to him.

Efrén was convicted 20 years ago by testimony from five youths, four of whom admitted complicity and are presently free, while Efrén, who refused to confess and maintains his innocence, remains locked up.

The Michigan Parole Board granted Efrén a hearing in December 2008. More than 100 people came to support him. They gave compelling testimony that he is a thoroughly competent person who would contribute more to society if free. He assists other prisoners with their cases and helps ease their depression; he transcribes books into Braille and is writing a book of his own. He organizes too, for example, a cancer walk among the prisoners raising more than \$1200. He is active in the End Latino Youth Violence Initiative.

But Efrén's major organizing work is to educate regarding the extraordinary U.S. practice of condemning children to die in prison. The U.S. is the only nation that admits to sentencing 12- to 17-year-olds to life without parole. There are 2,570 such people in the U.S. and only seven known cases outside it.

One can predict the statistics that accompany juvenile life without parole (JLWOP): in two states, Michigan and Pennsylvania, where the youth population is 8% African-American, the ratio is 20 minority to one white. One child was only 12 years old when sentenced.

About half of those serving JLWOP did not kill, but were accessories to murder with adult co-defendants. For 59% this was their first offense. Sixteen percent were 15 or younger when sentenced.

False confession, inept investigation and official misconduct resulted in a segment of the JLWOP population completely innocent of the crimes they were sentenced for. Efrén Paredes is a prime example. To learn about his case go to www.4efren.com.

The Illinois Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Children has produced a factual pamphlet at <http://www.law.northwestern.edu/cfjc/jlwop/>. Also, the Pendulum Foundation is a good source of information. A map at <http://www.endjlwop.org/stats-by-state> shows that whether children receive JLWOP depends on which state they live in. And <http://www.ricohthomasrico.blogspot.com/> is a blog that has several entries both on JLWOP and Efrén Paredes' case.

—January

EDITORIAL

Questions on Sotomayor

The Republican and right-wing hysterical attacks on President Obama's nomination of Sonia Sotomayor reveal not only how much is at stake with a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court, but how afraid they are of a judge who identifies as a woman of color. They have latched onto and condemned Sotomayor's comments given in a talk to college students: "I would hope a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experience would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn't lived that life." In that talk, she did nothing more than express a very simple truth: "Whether born from experience or inherent physiological or cultural differences...our gender and national origins may and will make a difference in our judging."

While there is precious little in Sotomayor's judgment history for Republicans and the Right to grab onto in their attempt to paint her as a "racist," as both Newt Gingrich and Rush Limbaugh charged, that has not stopped the rabid attacks, like Colorado former Rep. Tom Tancredo comparing her service with the civil rights organization, the National Council of La Raza, to working with a "Latino KKK without the hoods and nooses." That they ignore her 16 years of documented decisions and zero in on one speech to attack reveals the truth of her statement.

What is also painfully true—especially to those who want a better world—is that the Republicans took every opportunity to ram through the most ideologically tainted anti-labor, anti-environment, anti-abortion ideologues they could find: John Roberts, Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, and Samuel Alito. Their destructive rulings have wallowed in "personal feelings and political preferences." So outrageously ideological were they in their ruling outlawing DX abortions, that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg read her dissent from the bench, revealing just how completely their "inherent physiological or cultural differences" prejudiced their decision.

REPUBLICANS REVEAL CULTURAL BIAS

Despite both Alito's and Roberts's claims that they respect judicial precedent, Ginsburg said their decision overrode the clear precedent that anti-abortion laws must contain exceptions for pregnancies which endanger women's lives or health. The decision, she pointed out, wallows in anti-abortion ideology as it "invokes an anti-abortion shibboleth": they lied that women who

LGBT fight against discrimination

Memphis—On June 1, the struggle of Memphis and Shelby County LGBT activists and their allies to protect LGBT citizens from discrimination came to a head. The Shelby County Commission took up an ordinance which banned discrimination against people on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity in employment and access to services for employees of Shelby County, their contractors, and private business owners in the unincorporated areas of Shelby County.

This measure was incomplete, as most private businesses in Shelby County would have remained free to discriminate against LGBT people. However, even this incomplete measure was met with extreme opposition by some local Christian groups. Fortunately, more than four times as many supporters of the ordinance attended the June 1 meeting of the County Commission. But the County Commission refused to hear the majority's call for justice and fairness in Shelby County.

Rather than passing the ordinance, which would have had the force of law in Shelby County, the Commission passed an extremely watered down resolution, which did not specifically mention sexual orientation or gender identity as protected categories, but suggests that employment decisions should not be made on the basis of "non-merit factors." The resolution cannot be legally enforced and is only applicable to Shelby County Government.

In spite of the pathetic state of the final resolution, four of the 13 County Commissioners voted against it, citing religious conflicts. Local LGBT activists view the passage of the resolution as a partial and initial victory, but it is clear to all parties that the road to protecting Shelby County's LGBT citizens from discrimination is long and progress on it will be hard-fought. Some LGBT activists are calling for the resignation of Commissioners who cited religious opposition to the resolution and ordinance, since Shelby County is not supposed to be a theocracy.

—Amy

have abortions "regret their choices," and suffer from "severe depression and loss of esteem." She excoriated the justices who throughout "the opinion refer to obstetrician-gynecologists and surgeons who perform abortions not by the titles of their medical specialties, but by the pejorative label, 'abortion doctor.' A fetus is described as an 'unborn child,' and as a 'baby'...and the reasoned medical judgments of highly trained doctors dismissed as 'preferences' motivated by 'mere convenience.'"

Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell revealed clearly their sickening hypocrisy: "We will thoroughly examine her record to ensure she understands that the role of a jurist in our democracy is to apply the law evenhandedly, despite their own feelings or personal or political preferences."

Considering the stacking of the Supreme Court by George W. Bush with two right-wing ideologues who are anti-abortion to the extreme when he had no real mandate from the electorate, why did Obama, who has an overwhelming mandate for change—which most certainly includes changing the anti-abortion leaning of the Supreme Court—nominate someone whose

views on abortion rights are said to be unknown?

ABORTION VIEWS UNKNOWN?

Reportedly before making a decision on whom to nominate, Obama had a 60- to 70-page memorandum on each candidate. According to an aide, "There were five things that were on his mind: age, experience, independence, confidence and diversity." It is indefensible that his list did not include keeping abortion legal. Just as outrageous is the report that he has not asked Sotomayor her views on abortion or even the right to privacy upon which *Roe v. Wade* is based. Are we to believe nothing in those 60-plus pages gave a hint of Sotomayor's views on women's right to control their own bodies?

Well, there are a few hints: in 2002 she wrote an opinion on a case upholding the Bush administration's Global Gag Rule, the policy of withholding aid from international groups that provide, or even discuss, abortion—a rule directly responsible for the deaths of thousands of women. Another danger sign, from 2007, is not in the actual opinion she expressed but the language she used. In criticizing the position that women's husbands could not seek asylum because of China's abortion policy, she compared "the termination of a wanted pregnancy...as akin, no doubt, to the killing of a child." With this background, as scanty as it is, it is inexcusable for the National Organization for Women to be cheering her nomination simply because she's a woman. Have they learned nothing from the ill-considered support for Clarence Thomas because he is Black?

The nomination of Sotomayor is an opportunistic appeal from Obama to the growing Latino/a demographic. It also appears that Obama is so anxious to find "common ground" with anti-abortionists (see "Tragedy of Dr. Tiller's murder," page 1) and to damp down the debate, that he was anxious to find a candidate whose views on abortion were unknown. Both facts may make it easier for Judge Sotomayor to be the one to replace Justice David Souter, but Obama's pragmatism comes at the cost of playing with the future and lives of women.

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SEIU shafts home healthcare workers

Seattle, Wash.—Those of us who work at home in Washington state caring for a relative with special needs are being forced to change who we work for or lose our jobs.

We are paid for a certain amount of hours per month to keep our special needs family member in our home and care for them. This is paid through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). We also get health insurance. Most of us are employed by a Home Care agency.

Substitute House Bill (SHB) 2361, which recently passed, is forcing us to become Individual Providers, contracted with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). This means we can no longer be employed by a Home Care agency and are required to join the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

DDD pays \$2.50 less an hour than what we currently make. For most of us with over 250 caregiving hours, that is a loss of over \$500 per month. We are also required to give up our current health insurance plan and use the one the union offers. This plan is inferior to our current one. We will have to put out extra money for what the new policy does not cover. Add to that the union dues we have to pay, and most families are losing well over \$500 per month.

The other option is to give up our jobs and hire a stranger to take care of our family member. No one should have to make that choice. I resent being forced to join the union when it means lower pay and bad health insurance. The agencies are fighting to change SHB 2361, as they stand to lose over half their employees.

The state is trying to save money on the backs of people who need it to take care of themselves and be able to care for their family member with special needs. Many people with a disabled family member in the house can't work full time because of constant clinic appointments and the in-home care their relatives need. This is going to really hurt us. Some will have to put their family member in a nursing home or some other facility because of the loss of pay to take care of them. This program was originally designed to keep that from happening.

What kind of a union requires its incoming members to take a pay cut? The union is just a smoke screen for these cuts. Why doesn't DDD pay at least the same as the Home Care agencies?

—Suzanne Rose

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

International human rights groups call on Honduras to actively protect LGBT people by repealing its law that is supposed to protect "public morality." They want Honduras to enact laws prohibiting all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender expression. Violence against Transgender people is particularly rampant, with many incidents often perpetrated by police and never investigated nor prosecuted. While similar "public morality" laws exist in Guatemala, some Mexican states and Argentinian provinces, they have been struck down in Colombia and some other Latin American nations.

* * *

As the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, which sparked the U.S. LGBT rights movement, approaches, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Under this act, sexual orientation, gender identity, as well as disability, would be protected categories along with race, ethnicity and religion. Hopefully, the Senate will vote on the legislation before their summer session ends.

* * *

Even though U.S. President Barack Obama declared June Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month, it remains to be seen how much the President will actually do for the LGBT community. Obama's chief military adviser, Admiral Michael Mullen, said that if Congress repeals the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy (DADT)—which keeps Gays and Lesbians from serving openly in the military—the Pentagon will conform. The President, however, has taken no steps toward its repeal. In fact, Obama's administration successfully asked the Supreme Court to not hear challenges to DADT and the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Repeal of DADT and DOMA was one of his campaign promises.

* * *

From California to New York, there have been protests against the California Supreme Court's upholding of Proposition 8, the ballot measure defining marriage as only between a man and a woman. The 18,000 same-sex couples married prior to Proposition Hate's passage, however, remain legally married. In New Hampshire, same-sex marriage was legalized. Nevada's domestic partnership bill was passed by its Assembly, overriding Governor Gibbons' veto.

Specter of revolution stalks Iran's theocratic rulers

continued from p. 1

Women protesting today, asserting their drive to freedom in the most practical ways, are giving their answer to 30 years of escalating attacks upon them, and millions of incidents of brutality and degrading assault that often occurred in obscurity. They are writing their reply into history, on the world's stage.

TWO WORLDS IN EVERY COUNTRY

It is a revolt that was prefigured by the Million Signature Campaign and other protests against the worsening conditions for women under Ahmadinejad. The struggle to establish independent labor unions, as well as the massive defiance of the regime's religious decrees and policing, also were signs of things now arrived. That the regime itself had some awareness of this was shown in the last year, when the Revolutionary Guard began focusing on what tactics it would use to crush a popular internal rebellion, as opposed to any foreign threat.

Iran's workers have also made their voices heard in this crisis. The Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Bus Company Workers released this statement: "We condemn the suppression of civic institutions. In recent days we have been witness to the presence and passionate activity of millions of women, men, old and young, national and religious minorities in Iran who are demanding that the government recognize their basic rights...the fact that the demands of [the] overwhelming majority of Iranian society go far beyond trade union demands is clear to all. And we have always stressed that unless the principles of the freedom of organization and free elections have been made real, realization of social freedoms and union rights is not possible. Therefore, the Vahed Workers trade union is an integral part of the overall struggles for [the] establishment of free and independent social institutions...That's why we ask that June 26, which has been declared to be the day of support for jailed workers and union organizing in Iran, be elevated to the day of human rights in Iran. We ask our coworkers all around the world to actively support the extinguished rights of the Iranian people."

Workers at Khodro automobile company, Iran's largest, said this: "We declare our solidarity with the movement of the people of Iran. Autoworkers, Fellow Laborers: What we witness today is an insult to the intelligence of the people and disregard for their votes,

the trampling of the principles of the Constitution by the government. It is our duty to join this people's movement. We the workers of Iran Khodro, Thursday [June 18], in each working shift will stop working for half an hour to protest the suppression of students, workers, women, and the Constitution and declare our solidarity with the movement of the people of Iran. The morning and afternoon shifts from 10 to 10:30. The night shift from 3 to 3:30."

With scenes reminiscent of the 1979 Revolution—and with many in the opposition trying to follow the forms of that era, as in the nightly rooftop chants of "Allahu Akbar!" and commemorations of martyrs—it is time to address the contradictory meaning of the 1979 Revolution as well. It has direct bearing for today.

As Raya Dunayevskaya pointed out at the time, the question of the ambivalent role of Shi'a clerics in the Iranian revolution goes back to Iran's Constitutional Revolution of 1906-11. They did support the first stage of that Revolution, but "...once a democratic Constitution was created, the clergy began burdening it with the type of amendments that restored most powers to the Shah once the foreign enemy was thrown out...

The second chapter of that first revolution, as the second chapter of this era's 1979 Revolution, was begun by women liberationists"

("What Has Happened to the Iranian Revolution...?" p. 4, this issue).

The 1979 Revolution was the first great social revolution to take place after Women's Liberation had moved from an idea whose time has come to a mass movement. For Marxist-Humanism it became an indispensable category of revolution, as seen in Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. There for the first time Marx's Marxism stood clear, including the gulf between Marx and Engels on the "Woman Question." It was a question of total liberation for all.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PHILOSOPHY

The great need of revolutionaries in Iran and elsewhere was to take responsibility for a philosophy of liberation that would brook no compromises with the clerics, or with any others who would limit the striving for full freedom. What was needed was that philosophy of revolution that would initiate the road to a classless society on truly new humanist beginnings. This is not

merely an abstract question.

Today's mass movement is raising demands, from the end of the religious police and of "forced veiling," to even ending the position of Supreme Guide which Ayatollah Khamenei inherited from Ayatollah Khomeini. The kind of constitutional questions being raised by this new movement directly address central historic problems of the Iranian revolution. Just as the tendency of the masses has been to go beyond the issue of a stolen election among regime insiders, so it would be wrong to fetter our thought to the maneuvers of these insiders.

As much as any crisis of our time, today's events in Iran show the need for a return to the fullness of Marx's Marxism. History has brought Marx's philosophy of revolution together with Women's Liberation here. It is necessary to take responsibility for articulating this. To take any other ground would be to fall into the trap pointed to by the great Irish revolutionary James Connolly: "Don't be 'practical' in politics. To be practical in that sense means that you have schooled yourself to think along the lines, and in the grooves those who rob you would desire you to think."

LIBERATORY VISION OF THE FUTURE NEEDED

As of this moment, Iran's rulers will be likely to prefer Ahmadinejad. He represents all that they have left: the whip arm of the institutionalized counter-revolution. Ayatollah Khamenei affirmed this at Friday prayers June 19, threatening anti-Ahmadinejad demonstrators with more "blood and chaos" to come. The regime that can't deliver jobs, dignity, or peace can deliver oppression and murder well enough. Some demonstrators are now chanting "Death to Khamenei" in response.

Ahmadinejad was also favored, in the early hours after his "re-election," by some hawkish elements in the U.S. and Israel who were using him as an excuse to prepare for possible military intervention in Iran.

At least some of that talk has been silenced, shamed by the heroism and creativity of the Iranian people. More than ever it will be necessary for revolutionaries to present a vision that is the absolute opposite of all this reaction which feeds upon reaction.

—June 21, 2009

As we go to press, many calls for a general strike have gone out on Twitter and Facebook, and Iran Focus reports that 80% of shops were closed in a bazaar strike in Iranian Kurdistan. The struggle continues and has our greatest solidarity.

Immigrants march for human rights



Los Angeles—The May 1 multiple demonstrations here for immigrants' and workers' rights were a continuation of the massive national protests since March 25. They erupted against federal legislation proposed by Rep. Sensenbrenner that would criminalize all undocumented immigrants and those who support them as felons. The issue, then as now, is human rights for all undocumented immigrants.

In the suburb of Cerritos, the South Asian Network organized a march for Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Bengali immigrants. They protested against police harassment, detention, border militarization, and for human rights. Afterward, many joined the march in downtown Los Angeles.

The downtown march, organized by the Southern California Immigration Coalition, demanded full rights for all immigrants, especially the right to family unity.

Another march started from Echo Park and continued to the historic Olvera Street downtown. It was sponsored by the Multi-ethnic Immigrant Worker Organizing Network and the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights-L.A. and included a large contingent from Teamster Solid Waste Workers.

Signs read: "We are human, stop the raids, humane immigration reform now," "Stop detention and deportation," "Amnesty for all," "Support the Employee Free Choice Act," and "Legalization now," referring to the 12 million undocumented workers in the U.S.

As the march ended we all participated in a giant card stunt meant for President Obama that from the air read: "WORKERS FIRST."

—Basho

The irrepressible spirit of revolutionary Iran

Reminiscent of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, this mass movement has unleashed the fury of people who have endured 30 years of ruthless oppression. Many dissidents, who did not have the chance to show an independent voice, have gone far beyond reform. This feels like the same irrepressible spirit of the revolution 30 years ago—the same uncompromising will with full knowledge and acceptance of the bloody sacrifices that must be made in pursuit of freedom and justice.

Even the slogans, and actions—like the prank newspaper headline "Ahmadinejad is gone" held up by demonstrators—are an echo of the famous *Keyhan* newspaper headline when the revolution forced the Shah out of Iran: "The Shah is gone." The demonstrators know the thugs want to kill a few of them to scare them off, but they are ready, dressed all in green (like in the revolution days when they would dress all in white, and say they are ready to die in the name of freedom).

WOMEN IN THE LEADERSHIP

For the past few years the Islamic Republic has been steeped with widespread corruption, shameful foreign policy, inflation and a bleak job market for the youth. There have been sporadic protests by the women's and student movements, and workers' strikes in the last years met with bloody clampdowns. The movement was practicing for today's outpouring and has become wise, full of analysis, calls for unity, and advice on how to stay non-violent, as well as calls outside of Iran to make the world aware of what is going on.

The grassroots One Million Signature campaign (see April-May 2008 *N&L* "Million Signature Campaign in Iran"), and most other women's rights groups, have made it clear that their struggles for civil rights are inseparable from the rights of workers, students and others. Women campaigned vehemently for three election demands: for Iran to ratify the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; to eliminate discriminatory laws against women; and to grant women equality under the law, lifting repression against women, students, and workers. Women used the pre-election atmosphere to inject their agenda into the dialog with the public and candidates. The student movement and the women's rights movement reinforced each other.

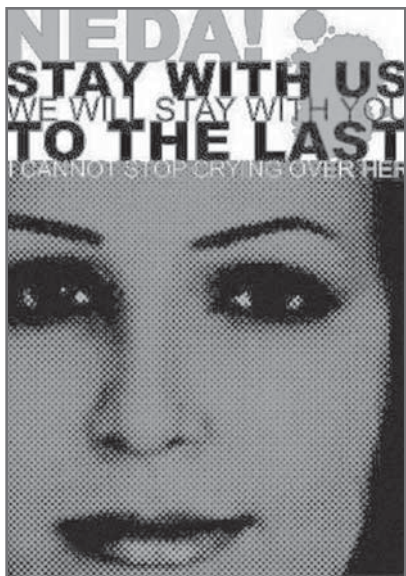
The regime's responses to women's demands became the measure of how repressive it is in all spheres of life. Women are deeply involved in the struggle for change and their resistance has become emblematic. This is huge progress from the days of the revolution, a beacon of hope that we will not allow women's rights to be sacrificed. The One Million Signature campaign's style of grassroots activism and broad and horizontal movement, is a pioneering force. It's heartwarming to see women at the forefront of protests and sit-ins.

On June 17, Nobel Prize winner, civil rights attorney and feminist Shirin Ebadi was among those who called for a new election with the presence of international observers. She also called for immediate release of Zahra Rahnava, Mousavi's wife, whose public presence as a spokesperson for Mousavi's campaign has been a source of inspiration for the more conservative of the reform. Rahnava has been challenged for her limited vision and presumption of leadership by some of the more radical of the student movement. For example, when she tried to get students to peacefully leave one of their protests, they told her that her husband was "one" candidate, that their demands go far beyond the fraudulent election results, and that they will decide when and how they will leave their protest.

VIOLENCE WILL NOT STOP THE MOVEMENT

This government does not shy away from using instruments of extreme violence: Ansar Hezbollah, guardians of the revolution; and Basij, chock full of thugs with experience of savage war with Iraq and military attacks in Kurdistan. The emails, pictures, films streaming on the net are full of bloodied faces and bodies being dragged by the hair. Students are being attacked in their sleep in the dorms, some shot to death. It is horrific that the body of a young woman student movement leader was found on June 17, stabbed 25 times, her neck ripped open. And Neda Agha-Soltan, a young woman shot to death in the streets by a sniper, has galvanized women and youth the world over who vow that she will never be forgotten. Masses keep pouring into the streets, full of determination, hope, steadfastness and awesome force that only a people committed to their liberation can show.

—Nazanin Afarim



Poster of Neda Agha-Soltan, shot to death in the streets by a sniper, has become a symbol for the movement

Revolutionary Indigenous Peru

Indigenous people from the Amazonian region of Peru are the heart of a movement battling with President Alan García over the country's direction. In early April, 30,000 Indigenous people began a blockade of roads, waterways, airports, and a state oil pipeline, shutting down the oil flow and stranding 41 oil and gas company ships. The protests started last year against laws decreed by García to implement Peru's free trade pact with the U.S., which would make it easier for foreign companies to take over Indigenous land. Communal lands and water are under threat of privatization for oil drilling, logging, mining, and plantations.

In May García declared a state of emergency, prompting a declaration of insurgency from the AID-ESEP (Interethnic Peruvian Forest Development Association). This was followed May 27 by a national day of protest called by unions and social movement groups.

On June 5, the government pulled out all the stops in an effort to destroy the movement. Riot police and helicopters started shooting at 2,500 protesters non-violently blocking a highway near Bagua.

AT LEAST 40 INDIANS, including three children, were killed and many bodies were thrown into the Utcubamba River to cover up the killings, according to movement leaders.

Security forces then rampaged through nearby towns, including Bagua, where police snipers on rooftops shot into street crowds. In reprisal, buildings of the government and the ruling APRA party were destroyed. The government also imposed curfews in Amazonian towns and raided AIDSESEP's office in Lima, 400 miles away. A few days later, the state shut down Radio Voz de la Selva (Voice of the Forest), a voice of Amazonian peoples.

In the aftermath of the state-sponsored violence, more than 250 people were missing, possibly dead. Children as young as four were shot. Hospital workers and other witnesses reported that police took many civilian wounded and dead from the hospitals, burning bodies to cover up the extent of the killings. Meanwhile, the President ran a campaign including paid television

Franklin Rosemont, publisher-poet

Poet Franklin Rosemont passed away on April 12 in Chicago. He was a significant thinker and publisher.

Rosemont was raised with an appreciation of the labor movement. As a teenager he was greatly influenced by Black scholar St. Clair Drake. He encountered the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) through Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*, "a book about freedom," and a few years later he became a major factor in revitalizing the IWW. He and his young colleagues, including lifelong partner Penelope Rosemont, began publishing the important journal *The Rebel Worker* and established Solidarity Bookshop. In 1966 the Rosemonts founded the Chicago Surrealist Group, which has continued its activities to the present day.

IN THE 1970S FRANKLIN and Penelope Rosemont were part of the group who helped revitalize the Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, which reissued out-of-print revolutionary classics, as well as new works and rediscovered works by revolutionary working-class writers like T-Bone Slim and Covington Hall.

As Marxist-Humanists we appreciate the dialogue with Rosemont which began in the early 1960s when the IWW's Fred Thompson "...handed me a copy of Raya Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* and said, 'Here's a book that shows that old Hegel made some sense after all'" (*Dancin' in the Streets!* [2005]). Rosemont's important essay on "Karl Marx and the Iroquois" (1989) remains perhaps the most original and creative response to Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982).

Rosemont also knew that Joe Hill was worthy of the near-600 pages which he devoted to him in *Joe Hill: The IWW & the Making of a Revolutionary Working-class Counterculture* (2003). Franklin Rosemont will be missed. But through his visionary contributions as poet, publisher and incendiary he will remain present at the crucial moments. He did as much as anyone of his generation to bring life to the words, "Don't waste any time mourning, Organize!"

—Tim Finnigan

ads using anti-Indian racist code words like "ferocity and savagery" and accusing the Indigenous of starting the violence. Warning of "terrorist acts" and an "international Communist conspiracy," he compared the Indians to the Shining Path, Maoist guerrillas who committed many atrocities in the 1980s and 1990s, including against Indigenous communities. AIDSESEP leader Alberto Pizango was forced to seek asylum in the Nicaraguan embassy to avoid sedition charges.

FOR MONTHS GARCIA HAS been accusing the Indigenous of opposing "development." In reality they want development, but have raised the question: what kind of development? What they do not want is "progress" that destroys their entire way of life, dispossesses them and undermines their cultural autonomy. The killings at García's initiative are an acute outbreak



Awajun indigenous protesters on May 15 in Bagua, northern Peru, after armed police had attacked a peaceful blockade of the Corral Quemado Bridge.

of the violence inherent in the capitalist type of "development" pushed by Peru's ruling class, centering on driving Indigenous and poor people off communal lands and small farms to open them up to intensive, eco-destructive exploitation by transnational corporations.

Faced with this vicious attempt to destroy their movement, thousands of native people armed with spears vowed to maintain highway blockades to defend their ancestral lands. Hundreds of thousands demonstrated across Peru on June 11, in conjunction with a general strike. Solidarity protests were held that day in Quito, Ecuador; Washington, D.C.; and several cities in Europe and Canada. In Lima 20,000 marched, chanting, "The forest is not for sale."

Thousands of Indigenous communities have built this movement, led from the local level in their own decision-making structures. They have raised the banner of another kind of development as against global capitalism's push to commodify all resources and reduce the population, aside from a small elite, to landless wage-workers or slum-dwellers without formal employment. An ever-growing number of other sectors of society have stirred in revolt alongside them, from highland peasants and Indians to labor unions and students. In his drive to open up the Amazonian areas to globally integrated capitalist exploitation, García has forced a showdown. If he fails to crush the movement, the door will be opened to a transformation far greater than his possible fall from power.

—Franklin Dmitryev

L.A. schools protests

Los Angeles—On June 9, 700 to 1,000 mostly Latina/o and some Black students from inner-city high schools, along with teachers and community activists of all races, marched to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) downtown, where the Board of Directors were meeting to cut more positions.

Several signs read "Black & Brown = Most Teachers Cut." A woman professor of Chicana Studies said, "We won't stop until they bail out our teachers and schools." A 10th grade teacher said, "Of the \$1 billion stimulus money received, half has been put into a savings account." There are hunger strikes at various schools to try to hold on to the terminated teachers. Teachers and activists plan to camp out in front of the LAUSD building.

The struggle started on May Day, then, on May 15, 38 teachers along with A.J. Duffy, president of United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA), were arrested for blocking traffic in front of the LAUSD, protesting the termination of 2,500 teachers and larger class sizes. They chanted, "Don't raise class size" as the police moved in to arrest them.

The same day, 1,000 teachers, students, parents and supporters, dressed in black, demonstrated outside the LAUSD. Hundreds of students from many different high schools and colleges walked out to support the teachers.

On May 19, Californians overwhelmingly defeated five state propositions put on the ballot by the state legislature. Essentially, they were cuts on various social services to help balance the state budget.

The governor is also proposing drastic cuts in healthcare—including for the very poor—in welfare and education, borrowing local property tax money, forcing cities to cut fire protection, libraries, and state employee wages. He is leaving in place corporate tax loopholes and the Republicans' historic "No new taxes" which refers to taxes on corporations and the very rich. He now supports offshore drilling to help balance the budget. Many teachers are protesting by going on a fast.

—Basho

Museum murder is attack on thought

The murderous attack on the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., was an attack on all of humanity. It was an attack on a human attempt to intellectually comprehend an event of utter inhumanity, the Nazi attempt to annihilate the Jews of Europe.

In addition to the museum's displays and exhibits, it houses a library, an archive and the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, an important institution for scholarly efforts of Holocaust documentation and interpretation. Among the recent undertakings the archival collections of the Center has supported is the work of Father Patrick Desbois, a French priest who is systematically documenting the Nazi campaign to destroy the Jewish population of Ukraine after the invasion of the USSR in 1941. Desbois and his colleagues record interviews with elderly villagers who witnessed the events and carry out forensic work on the mass graves that are pointed out to them. He describes his experiences in a recent book, *The Holocaust by Bullets*.

The Holocaust denial movement, one thriving form of contemporary anti-Semitism of which the perpetrator of the museum attack was an adherent, persists in part because of the Holocaust's utter inhumanity. That is to say, it was so inhuman that to certain minds of an empirical bent, it approaches unbelievability. It is no accident that one of the first prominent American Holocaust deniers, Arthur Butz, is a professional engineer.

The murder of six million European Jews did happen, however, and the artifacts, images and archival documents gathered in the Holocaust Memorial Museum prove it. In this respect, the attack on the Museum can be said to have been an attack on the human power to think critically.

The bullets fired by the museum attacker killed Steven P. Johns, an African-American security guard carrying out his duties. We cannot let those same bullets intimidate us and prevent us from thinking and acting critically.

—Kevin Michaels

Caterpillar divestment

Chicago—On June 10 a diverse coalition rallied outside a shareholders meeting of Caterpillar.

Caterpillar sponsors Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine through its sales of equipment to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Caterpillar's equipment is used to build both the separation wall that illegally annexes Palestinian land and the illegal settlements. Caterpillar also sells weaponized bulldozers to the Israeli army, which uses them to demolish Palestinian homes. Despite years of condemnation, Caterpillar refuses to halt sales to the IDF, or even condemn the abuses.

While we rallied against Caterpillar's deadly profiteering, on the opposite side of the street, a smaller group of demonstrators voiced their support for the Israeli occupation. One man held a sign which read "I [heart] Nakba." Nakba is the Palestinian word for "catastrophe" and is used to refer to the forced dispossession of tens of thousands of Palestinians from their ancestral lands in 1948.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CATERPILLAR is part of a growing movement to target corporations that profit from the occupation in Palestine. In February of this year, Hampshire College, a small liberal arts school in Massachusetts, became the first U.S. college to divest from companies that profit from the occupation of Palestine. Hampshire was also the first college to divest from apartheid South Africa in the early 1970s.

Divestment at Hampshire was brought about only as a result of tireless and organized pressure from Hampshire Students for Justice in Palestine (HSJP). In my two years of working with HSJP, I learned that it is possible to win against the odds. It was an international divestment movement that helped bring the apartheid regime in South Africa to an end. Today, divestment from corporations that profit from the occupation of Palestine has the potential to help stop the racist and colonial oppression of Palestinians.

It is important to remember that we are not alone, and that together we can win. Please, join the movement and the struggle. Do it diversely and diligently, with dignity and with delight.

For more info see <http://www.bdsmovement.net/> and <http://www.hsjp.org/>

—Student militant

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WORLD VIEW

China 20 years after

Over 150,000 people marched in Hong Kong in the largest demonstration since 1989 to honor the thousands of workers and students killed by tanks and soldiers in and around Tiananmen Square 20 years ago on June 4. This demonstration represented dissent that China's rulers suppressed elsewhere.

The anniversary struck as the global recession has deepened, ending China's double digit annual economic growth. Wishful thinking official projections of 7.9% GDP growth for 2009 would fall just short of what is needed to absorb the growing workforce. But in light of exports dropping 25% since February, unemployment may rise this year by as many as 40 million workers—a tinderbox for unrest.

Therefore China's rulers employed extraordinary means to silence not only the Tiananmen generation of dissenters, but also the post-1980 generation that remade China as the world's workshop. Zhang Shijun, one of 300,000 soldiers ordered to clear Tiananmen



Square, was detained in March for expressing public regrets for the army's role. Ding Zilin and other members of Tiananmen Mothers were confined to their houses by force on June 4 this year.

As Beijing Spring unfolded over seven weeks in 1989, tens of millions of students and workers demonstrating in over 400 cities used technology like television and fax machines to bypass official control of information. This year, in advance of June 4, the government shut down social networking sites used especially by youth, like Twitter and Flickr, and even Hotmail, not unlike Iran blocking texting before and after the June elections.

The government has now threatened tighter control of each internet user by mandating that all personal computers sold after July 1 include built-in software allowing central blocking and monitoring of "pornography and other unhealthy information." Thanks to companies like Google and Yahoo customizing their systems for easier surveillance, reporters and essayists, or prominent satirists like Lu Di, have been jailed even before that new technology.

As the economic downturn began, 25,000 factories in the city of Dongguan alone shut their doors as of February. Guangdong provincial officials were pushing Beijing to suspend the Labor Contract Law, which legalized unions, though only for the foreign-owned export industry, in 2008. Workers in closed factories have had to challenge companies and local officials for even severance pay provisions in the law.

Companies like Wal-Mart and FedEx, which are virulently anti-union in the U.S., accepted the government's company union as their own company union. Yet reporters have found sweatshops supplying hi-tech products for companies like Apple and Microsoft that have kept even this weak union at bay, continuing to pay less than the minimum wage to workers locked in and working up to 100 hours a week.

A new round of strikes, each one a wildcat strike, has broken out among workers left holding the bag. Despite the new labor law, which was intended to reduce industrial strife, 85,000 strikes and other incidents were officially recorded in 2008.

It made news this spring that Zhao Ziyang, the Party Chairman removed from power in 1989 and placed under house arrest until his death in 2005, recorded his memoirs while confined and got them out to be published posthumously this year. They confirmed that the fear of workers' participation, particularly creation of autonomous unions, motivated Communist Party reaction to mass demonstrations for freedom and democracy, and ultimately to bloody suppression.

Six decades of questions in opposition to China's rulers—of workers' control, Marxist Humanism, freedom and democracy—have been suppressed but never fully answered. They remain alive for the next generation of students, intellectuals and workers.

—Bob McGuire

—Gerry Emmett

Sri Lanka tragedy

A tragedy continues to unfold against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. Tens of thousands of unarmed Tamil civilians—men, women and children—died in the last weeks of the war in Sri Lanka, as they faced wanton government shelling, as well as Tamil guerillas' desperate maneuvers to survive by using these fleeing civilians. They died as the world's governments, did little but issue abstract humanitarian appeals with no substance, with India and China actively supporting the Sri Lankan government's murderous last campaign.

Hundreds of thousands of displaced Tamil refugees are in Sri Lanka government camps (called welfare camps or internment camps), in the aftermath of the civil war. They are completely dependent on government officials and humanitarian aid for their survival. How authoritarian these camps are, and to what end they will be put, remains to be seen.

Within Sri Lanka, the principal Tamil opposition force, the Tamil Tigers, which have conducted a quite contradictory campaign for Tamil self-determination over the past 25 years, have been decisively defeated in a final murderous military campaign.

While for the moment, the authoritarian, militaristic Sri Lankan government rides high, it is clear that all the questions of decades-long racism and denied self-determination of the Tamil minority remain.

The right to self-determination lies in the divisions that were already present in the birth of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) as an independent nation in 1948: Sinhala-Buddhist Ceylon/Sri Lanka with a large minority of Hindu/Christian Tamils within. The more than half a century since has witnessed demands ranging from autonomy to a full-fledged independent Tamil nation. Massive bloodshed does not stop these demands.

—E. W.

Latin American Notes

El Salvador—Will the election and inauguration of Mauricio Funes, representing the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front), herald a new social beginning? Or will it stall at the defeat of the right-wing corrupt ARENA party with its origins in death squads, its decades-long military and then civilian repression, and its present-day crony capitalism?

A 12-year-long civil war with deep Reagan-led U.S. involvement left 75,000 dead and thousands and thousands more disappeared. It was followed by the 1992 "Peace Accords," the "truth squads," and attempts at reconciliation. Everything had to be carried out in the context of a blood-soaked ARENA rule until this presidential election.

Funes and the FMLN inherit a country of enormous inequality where the top 10% of the population has a share of income 57 times greater than the bottom 10%, with out-of-control crime, much of it imported from the U.S., with Los Angeles-based El Salvadoran youth gangs returning to the country.

The question now is will the initiative come from the social movements which brought Funes and the FMLN to the fore, or will it be stymied by the joint hand of U.S. and El Salvadoran capital, or by the decidedly mixed heritage of the FMLN itself? A new social beginning needs to be rooted in the movements from below and in working out theoretical and practical points of departure for Latin America today.

—Eugene Walker

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. *News & Letters* was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910–1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the National Editorial

Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907–83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject what is, but to reveal

and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and her final 1987 Presentation on

the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and donated new supplementary volumes to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

In opposing this capitalistic, racist, sexist, heterosexist, class-ridden society, we have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead." We participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our *Constitution* states: "It is our aim...to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking. Send for a copy of the *Constitution* of News and Letters Committees.

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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WORKSHOPTALKS

Dollars shout healthcare workers

by Htun Lin

Obama recently singled out Kaiser HMO as a model for low-cost efficient healthcare, citing the care his grandmother got in Hawaii. Our CEO sent a memo congratulating us Kaiser employees. How did they show their appreciation? We were immediately hit with notices of impending layoffs to achieve more cost control.

This is supposedly due to the new economic environment and anticipated "revenue losses." Kaiser says companies it serves are closing and reducing our membership. New state mandates for cost controls are expected with plans to extend coverage. With the projected change coming from national healthcare reform, Kaiser is worried about the loss of windfall profits coming from years of gouging seniors through "Senior Advantage" plans. But Kaiser is now poised to expand by leaps and bounds. The real motivation behind the layoff scare is to extract further concessions from us.

The debates taking place in the media over healthcare reform need a reality check from workers who actually provide the care. The truth is that every ounce of quality care that Kaiser manages to deliver is a result of prolonged struggles by frontline healthcare providers. Care is delivered in spite of years of reducing frontline staff and elimination of hospital beds, even shutting down whole wards. Kaiser management at each stage was on the other side of battle lines drawn first by nurses in their struggle for quality care.

Kaiser managers were helped in maneuvering

continued on p. 3

BLACK/REDVIEW

'Academic lynchings' at Harvard

by John Alan

Editor's note: As John Alan is ill, we are reprinting his column from December 1974 which brings to mind the recent arrest of Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates in his own home.

At the 59th Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, Dr. Ewart Guinier, chairman of Harvard University's Afro-American Studies Department, accused Harvard of "academic lynching of Black students."

Dr. Guinier's blast against this venerable institution stems from his experiences with President Derek Bok and Dean Henry Rosovsky. Dr. Guinier said: "President Bok and his underlings have not the slightest compunction about perverting truth and twisting reason and sequestering behavior, in order to maintain the oppression of Black people...[and] in fact, the treatment Blacks receive at Harvard today parallels their treatment in American life...[It] is no more elevated than that of the conservative majority of the U.S. Supreme Court, the current occupant of the White House, or the local police force."

CAMBRIDGE AND SOUTH BOSTON

Whether Dr. Guinier intended it or not, he has reduced the distance from South Boston and Cambridge to absolutely nothing. In South Boston, certain white people, given the moral sanction of President Gerald Ford, would prevent Black children from receiving

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Unemployment, suffering and revolt spawned by recession

by Russell Rockwell

As the Great Recession—already the longest downturn since World War II—soon enters its third year, U.S. workers are facing rapidly changing circumstances, few of them for the good. With the hemorrhaging of jobs, unemployment has resulted in families losing homes due to vanishing income and increasing home foreclosures.

The recent budget deal struck in California has exposed millions of youth to an eroding educational system, and left the entire population on their own to survive.

This may represent a new stage of capitalist crisis and demand new ways to understand and overcome it. Equally important, some attention has also been di-



Some 80 activists gathered at the Elihu Harris State Building in downtown Oakland, Calif. July 30 to protest California budget cuts that will hurt all but the wealthy.

rected to the question of what will happen after—and not only after the Great Recession in terms of the new economic and social landscape that may emerge.

The current crisis has unfolded as the domination of things over people. Millions of Americans are living and perceiving it as a crisis of capitalism and capitalism as the essence of an increasingly dehumanized society that needs to be overcome.

While several economic reports had indicated that the worst of the Great Recession, begun in fall 2007, may have passed, the June 2009 U.S. Department of Labor unemployment report threw cold water in the faces of many pundits and policy-makers in the Obama Administration. Some had recently

spoken optimistically of the appearance of economic "green shoots." Over the prior three months or so, in-

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Obama's Afghanistan surge

EDITORIAL

Having begun his run for president of the U.S. as an anti-war candidate, Obama now holds the reins of commander-in-chief. Far from pulling the imperialist U.S. behemoth away from war and militarism, he is the one who is being pulled into repeating Bush's Iraq "surge," this time in Afghanistan. U.S. combat troops will climb this year to 68,000, double the level at the time of Bush's departure—and now comes word that top brass are angling for 12,000 to 27,000 more. Troop deaths have climbed to the greatest death count by far since the war began: 43 U.S. troops and 33 other coalition troops in July 2009.

What has the war brought to Afghan people, besides the deaths of from 8,000 to 30,000 civilians? Not only do Afghans live at daily risk of attacks from coalition troops or the Taliban, but 62% are in debt and ten million in severe poverty. Of Afghan children between 7 and 14 years old, nearly one in four labor for scant pay, most of them for long hours under hazardous conditions. About 60% of girls are married off when only 9 to 15 years old.

AFGHAN WOMEN'S FREEDOM DISREGARDED

In July Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai signed a revised law governing Shi'a women, little changed from the law passed in March legalizing rape within marriage and forbidding women to leave their homes, seek work, get an education, or visit a doctor without their husband's permission (see "Afghan women as force and Reason," p. 2). Is this what U.S. "liberation" of Afghanistan means? Throwing aside Bush's pretense of concern for democracy, human rights or women's status, Obama has repeatedly declared that his "bottom line" is fighting al-Qaeda—period.

Obama has continued Bush's 2008 surge of killings by drone aircraft in Pakistan—with the aid of Pakistan's government—stirring outrage and protests in Lahore and Karachi. The two countries' rulers are allies in a war that has slaughtered an unknown number of civilians, including the June 23 drone attack on a funeral procession, which killed 50 to 80 people.

The conflict in Pakistan's Swat Valley, fought on the backs of working people, reveals the nature of the "global war on terrorism"—which remains the same even if the administration changes the war's name. Like much of Pakistan, Swat has long been controlled by a small elite of wealthy landlords, who exploited the labor of landless peasants. The Taliban appealed to peasants for support in driving the ruling families out, winning favor by taking a smaller share of the peasants' labor than the landlords took.

The support waned when it became clear that the Tal-

iban

were another brutal set of oppressors, particularly after a video circulated showing a 17-year-old girl in the Swat Valley, held down by three masked men for a public flogging. At that very time the Pakistani government had inaugurated a deal to impose Islamic law and give the Taliban free rein in Swat. The deal fell apart after the Taliban used Swat as a base for expanding into neighboring regions.

The full force of Pakistan's army came down on the valley, and two million people were forced from their homes. Now victory has been declared, and they are being ordered to return whether they want to or not, with fighting still going on, and many homes and schools in ruins or occupied by the army. What the army aims to re-establish above all is the order of hard labor and squalid living conditions for the vast majority.

The same dynamic is at work in Obama's continuation of the Bush Administration's policies not only on war but on repression, including at home. Secret rendition of prisoners to torture centers in other countries continues. Detention without charge continues. The Obama administration has tried to keep Mohammed Jawad, captured in Afghanistan as a child, behind bars despite the torture-extracted "evidence" against him being thrown out by the judge. And the administration is defending in court the Bush policy of warrantless wiretapping of millions of U.S. citizens.

Whether it is the "democratic" U.S. and allied states, or reactionary groups promising "Islamic justice," none offer any exit from this global system of exploitation, oppression and war.

THE OPPOSITE OF WAR IS REVOLUTION

There is no sharp boundary between conflicts among states—including warlords and would-be state powers organized as terrorist groups—and the wars waged by rulers against their own people. The truly decisive division is that between the rulers and the ruled in each country. The only genuine opposition to war comes from the revolt and resistance of the people, whether that be the uprising in Iran sparked by the stolen election or the mass resistance against the coup in Honduras. As News and Letters Committees has asked since our founding, "Are you with the people struggling for a totally new way of life, or with capitalism fighting to perpetuate itself?"

Our opposition to war must therefore spell out not only what we are against but what we are for: a world of new human relations, beginning at the point of production, and encompassing all the dimensions opened up by humanity's many-faceted struggles for freedom.

Afghan women as force & Reason

WOMAN
AS
REASON

by Terry Moon

Never has the situation been worse for women in Afghanistan. Any woman who holds public office, who has a non-traditional job or who fights for women's rights may well be murdered—many already have been. Rape, trafficking, honor killings, and suicides are all at unprecedented levels. Girls going to school are poisoned, have acid thrown in their faces, and their schools are burned to the ground. At the same time as Afghan women's security, safety, freedom and very lives are being destroyed, their struggle for freedom is seen by those in power as a diversion that threatens Afghanistan's shaky ruling coalition and delays stability.

As the U.S. ratchets up the war there (see Editorial, p. 1) what we are **for** is the deepest solidarity that comprehends that Afghan women embody the revolutionary force and Reason necessary to transform their society into one that meets their needs, one that is based on new human relations.

SOME FEMINIST SQUABBLES

Given the need for this level of solidarity, it is disturbing that Sonali Kolhatkar, founder and host of "Up-

rising Radio," a progressive program that takes up global issues often concentrating on women's struggles, and Mariam Rawi, a writer and member of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, have launched on the website AlterNet an attack on the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF), dedicated to women's equality, reproductive health, and non-violence.

Kolhatkar and Rawi attack the FMF for calling for the expansion of peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan. They use that information

to show that U.S. intervention in Afghanistan has not helped women, but the exact opposite. The FMF does not deny the charge, but protests that if the U.S. pulls out, things will only get worse for women and girls in Afghanistan, and they document their considerable history of helping Afghan women, including sounding the alarm about the deadly Taliban as far back as 1996.

Both sides claim their stances come from Afghan women—Eleanor Smeal and Helen Cho, writing for FMF, base themselves on the director of the Afghan Independent Commission on Human Rights, Dr. Sima Samar. Kolhatkar and Rawi quote one sentence from Malalai Joya, who first spoke out at the Loya Jirga in 2004 and has been bravely speaking out ever since.

While I certainly agree with Kolhatkar and Rawi, that the sooner the U.S. military leaves Afghanistan the better, their argument is troublesome in several ways. First, in a patronizing statement they make a



Over 300 Afghan women protested against a discriminating new law for Shiite Muslim women. The protest on April 15 was attacked by hundreds of stone throwing Afghan men. Among other outrages, the law bans women from seeking work, getting an education, or making a doctor's appointment without their husband's permission.

false dichotomy between sexist culture, what they call "patriarchy," and the war: "Sadly, as horrifying as the status of women in Afghanistan may sound to those of us who live in the West, the biggest problems faced by Afghan women are not related to patriarchy. Their biggest problem is war." Rather than counterpose these horrors—which means that first you must get rid of the U.S. and then you can fight male chauvinism—it is important to see that Afghan women fight both at once. That is because war always exacerbates the sexism inherent in all cultures, including in Afghan culture.

Second, they treat an entire women's liberation movement—one that exists in Afghanistan as well as the U.S.—as if it can be characterized by one, albeit one important, organization: "That is why it was so discouraging to learn that the Feminist Majority Foundation has lent its good name—and the good name of feminism in general—to advocate for further troop escalation and war." Yet there are many feminist organizations who disagree with the FMF keep-U.S.-troops-in-Afghanistan stance.

Third, their solution is not just a U.S. withdrawal, but a confusing, unexplained "negotiated settlement": "The first step toward improving people's lives is a negotiated settlement to end the war." Who is to negotiate with whom? The U.S. with the U.S.-puppet Northern Alliance warlords, whose previous reign was so brutal

that the Afghan people first welcomed the Taliban as a better alternative? The inhuman Taliban with the equally horrible Northern Alliance? All three? Exactly how is that a solution? Or is it that what is most important to Kolhatkar and Rawi is that "**the first step**" is for the U.S. to get out?

While Afghan women fight and suffer, now is not the time for the old left cant that the "real enemy is U.S. imperialism," which gives homegrown thugs and dictators a free pass. While the withdrawal of U.S. troops is

what most Afghan citizens are calling for—and we demand it as well—what is equally important is our continued deep solidarity with the aspirations of Afghan women for **total** freedom.

PASSIONATE SOLIDARITY REQUIRED

Afghan women have articulated for themselves in many speeches, acts of bravery, and forums what they are fighting for. One example is the Afghan Women's Bill of Rights, drafted by 45 ethnically diverse women from every region of Afghanistan. Each article was debated by all and unanimously agreed upon. Here are only a few of its 16 demands: mandatory education for women through secondary school and opportunities for all women for higher education; up-to-date health services with special attention to reproductive rights; security for women; the prevention and criminalization of sexual harassment publicly and in the home; freedom of speech; freedom to vote and run for office; full inclusion of women in the judiciary system; and minimum marriageable age set at 18 years.

Any movement forward for Afghanistan will come from women and others who are fighting the U.S. and their own internal sexist culture and rulers, with their hearts and minds determined to create freedom.

Home healthcare win

Seattle, Wash.—On July 30, home healthcare workers fighting Substitute House Bill 2361, which would force those of us caring for a disabled relative to become Individual Providers with the state and the Department of Developmental Disabilities, went back to court (see "SEIU shafts home healthcare workers," June-July N&L). The bill says if we want to keep our jobs taking care of a disabled relative, we have to quit Home Health Care agencies and join the union (SEIU), and take a large cut in pay and healthcare benefits.

We won a Temporary Restraining Order last month, keeping the state from implementing SHB 2361. This new court date was for a Temporary Injunction against the bill.

A call went out to SEIU to pack the courtroom to keep out the disabled people and their families! It didn't work. We all got there early and there were more of us in the courtroom than SEIU bureaucrats.

The lawyers provided solid arguments based on the Americans with Disabilities Act and the testimonies of many people in the courtroom. They presented the human side of the situation while the opposing lawyers ignored that issue.

The judge continued the Temporary Restraining Order until Aug. 12, saying he needed more time to make a decision. We consider it a temporary victory.

—Suzanne Rose

'The Purity Myth'

The Purity Myth – How America's Obsession with Virginity is Hurting Young Women, by Jessica Valenti (Seal Press, Berkeley, Cal., 2009).

Jessica Valenti writes about how the religious Right has resurrected the extremely sexist notion of female "purity" in its fight against the empowerment of women and a feminist society. The myth is that a woman can only be "pure" if she has never had sex and that this is the only meaning of morality for a woman. For a man, morality means developing qualities such as honesty, courage and dedication, which requires him to do things in the world. For a woman, it means to passively avoid something, as much as the religious Right tries to dress it up in feminist language of strength. "Purity" ends up being a club to which only a few white, heterosexual, middle to upper class, and conventionally attractive women can belong.

Valenti calls the religious Right's abstinence-only movement the "virginity movement" because it makes girls' virginity into a sexual fetish. This movement holds "purity balls" where girls receive silver rings from their fathers in exchange for little pink boxes. Sometimes fathers give daughters lockets and keep the keys to give to their future sons-in-law. The daughters swear an oath to their fathers that they won't have sex until they are married, which echoes the times when a woman was the property of her father and then her husband. The abstinence movement sells T-shirts for girls saying "No Trespassing on This Property—My Father is Watching" and "Virginity is Hot."

LIES ABOUT SEX AROUND

Valenti discusses abstinence-only classes, run by religious right organizations which still receive federal funding. They teach outrageous lies about sex, contraceptives and abortion and that non-marital sex is always devastatingly dangerous. Valenti's view is that it is important for teenagers to be equipped to make responsible decisions about sex and to be taught that non-procreative sex is positive. She emphasizes that not having sex is also a positive choice and that morality lies in making responsible decisions.

Abstinence-only classes also preach sexist gender roles including that all women are asexual and that all men are ravenously sexual. Girls are taught their role is to say no to sex, and prevent men from raping them. Valenti describes how this notion infects the larger society. Media commentators say that it is a woman's fault if a man rapes or harasses her if she is in a public place like a bar, a workplace, or the internet. They often blame feminism. Thus the purity myth suppresses women's lives along with our sexuality.

The purity myth has disturbingly seeped into legislation intended to "protect" women from making what the religious Right, or anyone else for that matter, considers a bad decision. Most obvious are laws against abortion, and Valenti quotes anti-abortion activists saying that women who have abortions are "victims." There is also a welfare "reform" program that spends tax money telling women to get married rather than helping them get education and jobs.

Valenti dedicates a chapter to how the purity myth's notion of masculinity is harmful to men. The religious Right and pop culture define men as dominant over and better than women, and if they don't hold to it they are in danger of symbolically becoming like a woman and a potential victim of male violence. Both forces claim that feminism has caused a "crisis in masculinity" because women are supposedly "trying to be like men." In reality, feminism is about women and men being equally human, and Valenti calls for that kind of world.

WOMEN AND MEN EQUALLY HUMAN

Readers are urged to fight the purity myth by educating ourselves and others about the myth and its movement, and by activism such as using the internet to fight religious right legislation, and participation in reading, writing, and commenting on blogs. She urges us to inform ourselves about all sides of controversial sexual issues. She states that community is important and that "the most radical and cutting-edge organizing happens on a local level." She tells us to "trust women" to make our own choices and to know that women's activism is an example of how our sexual status has nothing to do with our morality.

This book is important because it coherently discusses basic aspects of feminism. It asks readers to radically examine ideas such as "purity" and "virginity" (which doesn't even have a medical definition) that society takes for granted and explains how these notions are used by the religious Right to control women and society. Importantly, it tells readers how to get involved in activism with a sense of optimism that these horrifying and deeply rooted problems can be changed.

—Adele



WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) condemned a decision by the Hamas-run judiciary in Gaza to force so-called modest dress—traditional robes and veils covering their hair—on women lawyers. It is scheduled to go into effect on Sept. 1. PCHR called this decision a "form of discrimination against women that undermines personal freedoms ensured by the constitution."

* * *

At least 15 HIV-positive women in Namibia are suing their government because they were forcibly sterilized. They are part of a group of at least 40 Namibian women who had been sterilized against their will. They were coerced into signing consent documents when they were undergoing HIV treatment and did not have sterilization explained to them.

* * *

Three Irish women are challenging Ireland's abortion ban in the European Court of Human Rights, saying their health and well-being were threatened by the law. More than 7,000 women yearly travel from Ireland to obtain safe, legal abortions. The Irish Family Planning Association calls this direct discrimination based on sex and financial status.

* * *

—Feminist News

A Federal Appeals Court in Illinois ruled in July that a law requiring parental notification, though not consent, before abortions for teenage girls is constitutional. Originally passed in 1984, the law's enforcement was banned by a federal judge in 2007.

Year-long Stella D'Oro strike solidarity

Bronx, N.Y.—Once Brynwood Partners, a Wall Street equity firm, bought the Stella D'Oro Biscuit Company in the Bronx last year, it decided to force the union, Local 50 of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers, and Grain Millers, to accept a draconian contract. It would have cut wages by 25%, eliminated paid sick days and vacations, and cut pension and health benefits. If the workers refused, it would threaten to close the plant or sell it to another firm which would move Stella D'Oro's operations out of state.

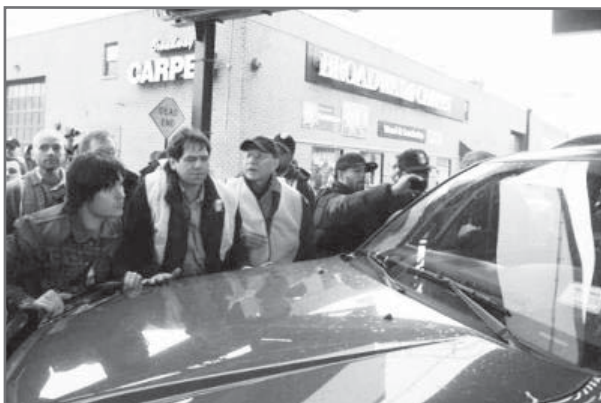
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The union struck and the community organized a support committee of activists from various groups. Brynwood hired scabs and refused to negotiate. The union went to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and their case was accepted for review, so the strikers were able to receive unemployment compensation, supplemented by a small strike fund.

Other city unions contributed money to help the Stella D'Oro Support Committee. Militant strikers held rallies and got the struggle into the press. The strike dragged on for 11 months.

Despite the limited income the workers received, the company could not break their solidarity. On June 30, the NLRB ruled against the company and ordered that the workers be accepted back on the job under their old contract and that Brynwood negotiate in good faith. Brynwood announced it would shut the plant down but the union refused to accept an unfair contract. Instead it went to court for an injunction to prevent the plant shutdown. Brynwood then said it had a buyer, Lance, Inc., another bakery company based in North Carolina, which might move the plant out of state.

Worker solidarity remained solid. With the help of the support committee, workers contacted unions in other states to disinvest in Lance, Inc., if Lance bought



Stella D'Oro strikers and supporters forcibly prevent scabs from entering the plant.

Stella D'Oro and then moved it out of state. A rally was held on July 29 in front of Goldman-Sachs, which owns stock in Lance, Inc. Articles appeared in newspapers, and Lance announced it would not buy Stella D'Oro.

Meanwhile, the union has asked the New York City Council to pass a resolution to oppose closing or moving the plant out of state. The search for the cheapest labor, reducing labor throughout the world to the lowest common denominator, is an integral part of capitalism.

BEACON OF SOLIDARITY

As capitalism continues to implode, the Stella D'Oro struggle can be an important example to other workers of how worker solidarity can stand up to the unceasing greed of capitalists to maximize their profits at the expense of the working class.

Celebrate one year of struggle at Stella D'Oro. Rally with workers and supporters at the Stella D'Oro plant, Aug. 15, 12pm-2pm, 237th Street & Broadway.

—Tom Siracuse

Sitdown at SsangYong

Workers at SsangYong Motors in Pyeongtek, South Korea (just south of Seoul), have ended occupation of their factory, begun in May when the company announced that 2,646 workers, or 36% of the work force, were to be dismissed. They survived attacks by riot police, helicopters dropping tear gas, company-hired thugs, and shutoff of electricity and water. They stood firm in their demand that no workers be laid off, until on Aug. 6 they agreed to the company offer to retain half the laid-off workers.

SsangYong Motors, South Korea's fourth largest automaker, has been in receivership since January. China's Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation, owning 51% of SsangYong Motors, was not interested in resuming production but in technology transfer to China.

Sanup Bank, owned by the South Korean government, is the company's biggest creditor. It is state-capitalism in action. The bank wanted to re-open the factory with a smaller, more heavily exploited work force in order to make it attractive to newer investors.

The stakes in the sitdown were high. While SsangYong is not in a class with Daewoo or Hyundai, the occupation could inspire the workers at those companies—and elsewhere. It is a moment when labor, as a force and as an idea, is coming to occupy the world stage in a new way.

—Gerry Emmett

(Thanks to Loren Goldner, libcom.org, for some info.)

What capitalism fears

Hemet, Cal.—From the time we are born, we are trapped in a system that is over all of us. We think we have freedom. The real question is: Are we really free? No matter if you are at the top or at the bottom, rich or poor, both classes are only thinking survival thoughts. You are trapped in this thought process.

For the most part this thought process has become our reality, our state of being. This is why I agree with the headline, "When unions think like capitalists," in the June-July "Workshop Talks."

As a worker—a displaced worker, a senior no longer able to work—it got me thinking. This capitalistic system, our way of life worldwide, fears workers thinking freely. It fears when we the workers become free thinkers and begin to think our way out of our struggles, by thinking about a new system set up by the workers themselves. The capitalists truly fear new thinking.

The capitalists' biggest fear is that labor, the workers themselves, might find out that we are the only true value and take back what is really ours—our lives. It fears when we take back our labor, the capitalists no longer rule over us. As we change our thinking, we truly change our lives.

Karl Marx wrote, "Human power is its own end." My whole life has been one struggle after another, just like yours. Our best thinking got us here. It will be the power of our own thoughts that will bring real change.

—Martin

Union dilemma after card check defeat

Detroit—The defeat of the "Card Check" provision in the Employee Free Choice Act reflects the weakened position of unions in the U.S. and the divisions in the union movement itself. Organized labor had trumpeted it as its number one priority to make it easier to organize unions. If the card check provision had passed, workers in an unorganized workplace would have forced management to recognize a union if 50% of the workers signed cards supporting unionization.

Labor leaders claimed partial victory in this defeat because some provisions of the bill remain, including: shortening the time that management could harass, threaten and fire union supporters; organizers being able to talk to workers on company property; monitors to oversee the election process; and constraints on a company's ability to delay recognition of a union once it has been approved by the workers. But card check, the heart of the legislation, was cut out, and reflected the success of the multi-million dollar national campaign waged by business and its lobbyists.

While lip service came from both President Obama and Labor Secretary Solis in support of card check, it was not a priority. The administration did not mobilize to pass it, despite the fact that labor was such a vital factor in Obama's election.

The coalition of unions that left the AFL-CIO four years ago, headed by SEIU President Andy Stern and calling itself Change to Win, vowed to provide visionary leadership to restore labor's militant reputation and organize the unorganized.

WHILE THE DISCONTENT of the member unions (SEIU, Teamsters, Farm Workers, Food and Commercial Workers, Carpenters, Laborers and Unite Here) with the faltering AFL-CIO was certainly justified under the lackluster leadership of President John Sweeney and Secretary-Treasurer Rich Trumka, the coalition achieved nothing besides division within its own ranks, most recently through the efforts of Stern to take over Unite Here and a hospital workers union in California.

Because union resources were devoted to internal squabbles, the union movement's leadership squandered an important opportunity to achieve card check. Some are even declaring that Stern is uniting the labor movement in the U.S. against him.

This fragmented and declining union movement is facing the most critical and crisis-ridden objective situation in its history. Unemployment is at record levels, higher than 10% in 15 states and still rising, with no end in sight. Millions of workers and their families are losing their homes, pensions and healthcare.

TENT CITIES LIKE those during the Great Depression of the 1930s are springing up everywhere, despite unemployment compensation being extended to 79 weeks in the hardest hit states. This will all get worse, despite Obama's economic lackeys who proclaim that the "bottom" of the recession has been reached.

Unemployment compensation, however, is a very thin lifeline for the unemployed, enabling some to live only at the poverty level. This will not long be tolerated, and despair and resentment can quickly lead to revolt. Congress fears that the working-class ferment can escalate to rebellion. This is what they hope to prevent.

Labor leaders decry this economic decline, but offer no solutions. They know that rank-and-file rebellion means the end of their misleading behavior. Their long history of betrayals of the working class, at no time more concessionary than in recent years, will never be forgotten.

While Rich Trumka is expected to succeed John Sweeney as president of the AFL-CIO at the union convention in Pittsburgh Sept. 14-17, and has selected Elizabeth Shuler to be his running mate as Secretary-Treasurer, the first woman to be nominated for that position, it means little in terms of the union's descent.

Trumka, who has been Sweeney's second-in-command for 14 years, is not the same fighter he was as president of the UMW. While he waged huge battles against the coal operators, he could not halt the decline and near extinction of the UMW. He will preside over the same fate for the AFL-CIO unless there is radical change. No one expects that from Trumka.

—Andy Phillips

WORKSHOPTALKS

continued from p. 1

around the quality care struggle by traitorous union leaders like Andy Stern, whose brainchild was a Labor Management Partnership (LMP). The LMP was timed to defuse the quality care struggle. After having heard nothing in all these years from Stern since the partnership was implemented, he plastered the workplace with a clever leaflet recently with the slogans "Partnership Not Layoff!" and "Make the Partnership Work!" He is portraying himself as our advocate out to save our jobs.

This sounded good at first, as though Stern were trying to make up for his recent dictatorial takeover of the local union. The truth is that the national contract, including the partnership agreement, is coming up for review and negotiation in 2010. Kaiser management is thinking ahead. In order to prevent rank-and-file resistance to further concessionary demands from the partnership unions, what is better than to send out notices threatening layoffs? Stern is actively collaborating in this ruse by urging us union members to come up with our own ideas to help the company cut costs in order to "save our jobs."

PROFITS FROM LAYOFFS

He equates assisting management cost control with job security. Everyone knows that cost control means job insecurity—the ability of management to eliminate jobs at will. Kaiser is not unique in this. Many companies reported increased profits last quarter not through expanding production but rather through massive layoffs. Kaiser, which is expanding and supposedly non-profit, is playing the same game.

The current healthcare debate is obsessed over divvying up the healthcare dollar pie. That debate is in a totally different world from what is really going on in the clinics and wards. In this world there has been a struggle against the concrete effects of cost cutting for years. As for Obama's praise for his grandmother's care, a lot of us on the front lines of care at Kaiser say if our mothers were sick we would not want her in the hospital where we work.

EMPTY RIGHTS

For example, after an inspection from the state exposed many violations of patient care standards, Kaiser Oakland is obligated to find a bed within a half hour once a doctor orders a patient admitted. The nurse supervisor is now forced to arbitrarily assign a room number, even if that room has no bed ready, no nurse and no equipment for that patient. This new procedure may satisfy bureaucrats with their paperwork but in reality the patient doesn't get to a bed for several hours.

The only genuine healthcare reform is one that focuses on the relationship between patients and their caregivers. What Kaiser, the politicians, and union heads like Stern are peddling is not healthcare reform but restructuring healthcare according to capital's need in this era. For them there is no alternative to capitalism. There will be no resolving this ongoing crisis without overcoming the alienation experienced by workers in their daily activity.



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FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: This is an excerpt from "War and Revolution," the July 1971 Draft Perspectives Thesis for News and Letters Committees, Part III, "Praxis, Responsibility of Intellectuals and Our Tasks." The text of the full Draft, written while Dunayevskaya was completing the book *Philosophy and Revolution*, is included in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, #4454.

"The chief defect of all materialism up to now (including Feuerbach's) is that objective reality, what we apprehend through our senses, is understood only in the form of the **object** of contemplation; but not as **sensuous human activity**, as practice; not subjectively. Hence, in opposition to materialism, the **active** side was developed abstractly by idealism....Feuerbach wants sensuous objects really distinguished from objects of thought but he does not understand human activity itself as **objective** activity."—Karl Marx

All serious struggles in a revolutionary movement have always taken place, not over "tactics," but over revolutionary perspectives. But the theoretic void in the Marxist movement since the death of Lenin—nearly a half-century ago—has been so great that one is tempted to believe that there has been a void in time itself. Those who claim the name of Marxism have let slip out of their minds, not only this half-century, but also the century and a half since Marx worked out his theory of proletarian revolution, his philosophy of liberation as a philosophy of human activity which is **the absolute, dialectic opposite of the alienated labor** to which capitalism consigned the working class.

Time does not, of course, stand still. Just as Nature does not like a vacuum, so the human mind rebels against a void, against a "forgetting" of **theory**, against a retrogression in history, both as "past" and present, and a stifling of what is first **to be**. Because of this elemental and compelling need from the **movement** from practice itself, we must expose the current reduction of Marx's concept of **praxis** to the "practice," i.e., the carrying out, by the rank and file, of the "theory," i.e., the Party line that the leadership, the intellectuals, have elaborated **for** them. This is not a "translation" of the word, praxis, it is a perversion. The fatal character of this **mis**-interpretation of "praxis" is more relevant for our day than for that of Marx, when he was alive to work out a revolutionary alternative and thereby discover a whole new continent of theory—Historical Materialism. We must consider anew the historic period in which Marx lived **as he saw it**.

PRAXIS AND DIALECTIC

To this day, Marxists are shamefaced about Marx's alleged "glorification" of the proletariat, and do not accept his analysis of the revolt of the Silesian weavers of 1844 as having had a "conscious and theoretical character." Nevertheless, it was this, **just this type of vision**, that led Marx to break, not only with exploitative bourgeois society, but also with "socialists," "communists," and academic materialists who could not do what "idealism" had done—develop "the **active** side" (Marx's emphasis) of subjectivity.

Though the class nature of capitalist society is decisive, Marx did not limit his analysis of subjectivity to the difference between petty-bourgeois, egotistic subjectivity and proletarian, social subjectivity. Indeed, he insisted that "human activity itself" was "**objective**" (Marx's emphasis). Marx defined **praxis** as "revolutionary, critical-practical activity." Put concisely, Marx's great discovery—Historical Materialism—illuminated the whole of society as well as its transformation.

As shapers of history, as "Subject," the workers were becoming whole men and women, achieving a synthesis of mental and manual labor, of theory and practice, of philosophy and revolution. Of course, it is what men **do** that is decisive in history, but theory remains an active force because ideas are not abstractions. They have a dialectic of their own and are integral to praxis itself. Praxis has many forms and each and every one is dialectical—develops through contradiction. Thus, even when it is seen as no more than "material activity," i.e., alienated labor, it is this very alienation that produces the "quest for universality" so that class struggles at the point of production lead to political struggles and finally burst out as social revolution.

That these basics of the Marxism of Marx could be reduced to "the small coin of concrete questions," as Trotsky phrased it, speaks volumes about the administrative mentality of our state-capitalist age. Thus today's Trotskyists, along with the "New Left," follow Stalinism (be it Russian or Chinese or the "Structural" Althusser variety in France) with their endless discussion of "tactics." Their turning away from the Humanism of Marx, labeling it "pre-Marxist," speaks volumes about our age, but says nothing at all about its absolute dialectic opposite—the movement from practice to theory. It is as if revolutionary power does indeed come "out of the barrel of a gun" instead of the self-activity of the masses in elemental outburst. They likewise disre-

Praxis and responsibility of intellectuals

gard the very nearly continuous movement that began in the 1950s in East Europe and has since covered the globe. Yet this movement, not only as practice but as elements of theory, is far richer than its political expression in **any existing** party "to lead," including those who are **not** tied to a state power and do throw around the word revolution with great abandon. Nowhere have theoreticians—I naturally do not mean petty-bourgeois intellectuals but those who claim the name of Marxism—met their **historic** responsibilities.

Everywhere, no matter where we look—the challenge from practice has not been met: Look at France in the near-revolution of May 1968, or the U.S. of 1970-71 where a million poured out in anti-war demonstrations, but [were] quiescent in the face of the "My Lais" committed against Blacks right here. Look at the "New Left" in Great Britain who are tied, not to an actual party, but only to a concept; or look at Japan, where back in 1960, far in advance of the mass outbursts in any of the technologically advanced countries, the youth proclaimed their opposition to the U.S. and to their own government, and did so in the face of opposition from Communism, which wished to restrict the snake-dancing mass revolt to protests only against the U.S. Or look at Africa, where a new Third World was born, or to Italy, where no less than two million workers joined the Communist Party in opposition to private capitalism. But Italy is now face to face with the rise of neo-fascism because neither private capitalism nor state capitalism could stop the economic crises and total decadence. Again, everywhere, the challenge from practice has not been met.

Indeed, most have even failed to recognize the impotence of ceaseless activism sans philosophy. This failure is certainly not limited to this pragmatic land. Our task, however, will be illuminated by taking a look at Italy. The *Il Manifesto* group, which was expelled from the Communist Party, posed some of the most cogent questions. No one else in the Left has even attempted to face the "why" of the defeat of France 1968, when 10 million workers were out on general strike, when the students, the catalyst for this near-revolution, were the most politically advanced in the world, and revolutionary enough both to recognize the pivotal role of labor and to establish a new form of organization—the worker-student action committee. This was the highest stage reached—and reached in a technologically advanced land—in the turbulent 1960s when only the Third World seemed to make history. The *Il Manifesto* group, both in its own statement and in the interview with [Jean-Paul] Sartre, raised the burning questions of the day on class, on spontaneity, on the masses and the party.

ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS

And yet even though they were all intellectuals—and I don't mean petty-bourgeois but revolutionary theoreticians who accepted the key role of the proletariat in any social revolution—there was no tackling of new economic categories, such as state-capitalism, much less philosophic concepts. Instead, by holding on to loose old terms, like "advanced stage of capitalism," grappling with no philosophic concepts despite the fact that they were moved by a desire for a "revolutionary alternative" to the existing Communist Party which was practicing class collaborationism, they actually were talking on the same level as "the Party." They were concerned with proving that the need for individual freedom "is not simply a residue of 'humanism' which antedates capitalism." No wonder that not only were no "answers" forthcoming, but even correct questions seemed to lose their relevance.

Thus, although they caught the revolutionary spirit of the age—"the subjective maturity of the working class"—they could not spell out any "new form of organization" since this was linked, not with needs emerging from **mass practice**, subjectively, from below (a **live** "Subject"), but only to "conditions of struggle in the societies of advanced capitalism."

Thus, though they¹ rightly criticized [Herbert] Marcuse's glorification of "the Great Refusal" as well as [Daniel] Cohn-Bendit's "spontaneity"—as if a "counter-

culture" and "negation" of the old, were sufficient unto the day, that is, **the** revolutionary alternative—they too "elaborate" no new alternatives. It is as if a Maoist tinge to the concept of the Party were the answer to "a new form of organization."

Thus, even where they touch the implication of the need of "the transcendence of the Leninist or Bolshevik model of the party"...their end result is in the working with old categories as if there is a continuity instead of a **discontinuity** in capitalism itself. The **transformation into absolute opposite** of the first workers' state into a state-capitalist society, they attribute to paralysis in thought. To use Sartre's phrase, "the mode of existence of the Parties (which) paralyzes their (the intellectuals') collective effort of thought." How could it be otherwise when suddenly intellectuals, who joined to fight the status quo, must now express, not the mass struggle for freedom, but a state ideology, a State Plan, a State Economy?

Intellectuals (and not only where state power and outright exploitation of labor is practiced as in Russia and China, in East Europe and Cuba, but intellectuals of our state-capitalist age who do want to uproot capitalism as they see it and work for emancipation of labor) have completely and totally forgotten (because it is not **organic** to them as it is to labor) **what** Marx meant by a classless order. It is not just a dialectical "principle" which is at stake; it is a life and death struggle. It is what

Hegel called "individualism that lets nothing interfere with its universalism," i.e., freedom, and Marx called labor's "quest for universality" which underlines alienated labor's struggle to abolish the old exploitative society, and creates a new, class-less one where "the freedom of the individual is the basis of the freedom for all."

It is for this and for no other reason that Marx felt compelled to break with the bourgeoisie also on the very concept of what theory is. He saw theory coming from labor and only labor because labor is not only muscle but Reason. It is this which "disciplined" Marx. **Historic** responsibilities of Marxist intellectuals **begin**

with listening to the masses, and not being caught in the delusion that it is the intellectual brain wave which produces theory. Once you **can hear and do listen** to the voices from below as if your life depended on those voices—because it does—then, and only then, can you elaborate theory, **not** because you become a mere recording machine, **but because, having recorded these voices, your task far from ending has just begun. That defines not only intellectual responsibility but our tasks, and the key work remains projection**—projection of Marxist-Humanist ideas.

PREPARATION FOR REVOLUTION

First and foremost, of course, is the concretization of the Perspective on *War and Revolution* in a manner which will determine not only our activities in the anti-Vietnam war movement, but in all class struggles, Black struggle, Women's Liberation, Chicano, Indian. The determinant for all activities as well as writings, talks as well as relations—**all without exception**—is the concept of social revolution. We must free our minds from thinking that this is exhausted in the anti-Vietnam war activity as if that is the equivalent of a social revolution. There is no equivalent when there is no uprooting of class relations in one's own country, no ending of racism, no making inseparable the forces of revolution from their Reason.

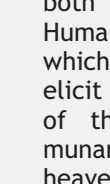
And there can be no social revolution when one, like the Trotskyists, hangs on to one or another group of state-capitalist societies calling themselves Communist. Nor can there be a spontaneous, elemental mass uprising when one is concentrating on "shortcuts." No matter how great the martyrs like Che [Guevara] who "lead" it, there can be no social revolution when one substitutes himself for the masses, or when the **method** used in the projection of ideas repeats the capitalistic division between mental and manual labor, with intellectual "prerogatives" blotting out workers' thoughts. One must practice theory by uniting the two **daily** in every struggle, in every human relation, be it Black and white, youth and adult, men and women, actual class struggle or merely the manner of writing them up so that the story itself projects philosophy and revolution. In a word every single act is a theoretic preparation for revolution the day **before**, the day **of**, and the day **after** revolution.

Explore the fully dialectical, humanist meaning of Praxis in ***Philosophy and Revolution*** by Raya Dunayevskaya.



"[Historical Materialism's] new dimension...could only have emerged from human beings, masses, classes, themselves reshaping history.

That, *that precisely*, marks the uniqueness of Marxian materialist dialectic, which is



both class-rooted and Humanist. It is this which enabled Marx to elicit from the *praxis* of the Parisian Communards 'storming the heavens,' the stripping off of the fetishism of commodities and the establishment of the totally new social relations as 'freely associated labor.'"

Philosophy and Revolution, a classic of Marxism, a key work of Marxist-Humanism. Only \$24.95. To order, see ad, p. 7.



¹ I'm referring to Rossana Rossanda and Lucio Magri of *Il Manifesto* as both articles and interview with Jean-Paul Sartre are in *Socialist Register*, 1970.

ESSAY

by Franklin Dmitryev

The tendency calling itself ecosocialism is a response not only to the massive environmental destruction in our capitalist world, but to the feeling that Green movements have not adequately challenged capitalism while socialist movements have treated ecology as an "afterthought," and neither has achieved its goals. It implies a recognition of the need to abolish capitalism if human society is to avoid catastrophe. Doing that requires grasping what is the core of capitalist relations that must be transformed.

Let's begin with a concept that is key to Marx's explanation of capitalism's social relations, its alienated labor, its fetishism, and the nature of the mysterious entity he called value: the dialectical inversion of subject and object, so that the object dominates the subject. In the factory the machine dominates the worker, but in Marx's concept of alienated labor, the same subject-object relationship also shapes the human relationship to nature, which implies that the alienation of humanity from nature cannot be overcome without overcoming the subject-object inversion inherent in alienated labor.

Crucially, Marx saw that the transcendence of alienation was more than simply eliminating private property. That was only the first negation, which itself would need to be transcended. As the founder of Marxist-Humanism Raya Dunayevskaya argued, our age has experienced counter-revolution coming from within revolution, as in the Russian Revolution.

That transformation into opposite showed the urgent need for new beginnings in philosophy, and the concreteness of Marx's point that social revolution goes beyond negating private property to the negation of that negation, that is, the transcendence of communism, or humanity reappropriating what it has made. That involves the reintegration of the human being's activity in all its moments, including relationship to nature.

The fact that revolutions as great as the Russian ended up being transformed into opposite, into bureaucratic state-capitalism, and that these totalitarian regimes called themselves Marxist, only served to disorient genuine revolutionaries. The "productivism" of these societies, their drive to industrialize no matter the cost to environment or to workers, did not stem from some alleged roots in Marx's theory but from the law of motion of capitalism, which they had no choice but to follow because the production relations were capitalistic.

How could ecosocialism avoid such an outcome? It is not so simple as setting a goal—such as "participating in ecosystems"¹—since emancipating labor was a principal goal of the Russian Revolution, yet it turned into its opposite, with no freedom for workers. What is crucial to grasp is what post-Marx Marxism lost that was in Marx's philosophy. All the Green attempts to reject Marxism are on the ground of post-Marx Marxism's truncated concepts of what socialism is, what revolution is, what liberation means. Nothing short of a philosophy of revolution that recaptures Marx's Humanism can provide the foundation for enabling revolution to continue in permanence. To reject Humanism as "anthropocentric" is to mistake humanity in its current alienated condition for what liberated humanity could potentially be, as well as to cut oneself off from subjects of revolution.

MARX'S SOCIALISM AS 'HUMAN POWER'

Marx's concept is of a revolution so total as to uproot all conditions in which "the human being objectifies herself/himself inhumanly in opposition to self."² That includes emancipation of labor, it includes the transformation of the alienated man/woman relationship, and it includes the reappropriation of the human relationship with nature. We are alienated from our own activity, and **therefore** from the interchange with nature, which is unsustainable in its present form **because** it is alienated and irrational.

Since Marx is often accused of "productivism," or of glorifying human transformative and productive powers, particularly in the form of industry, it is important to make the distinction between human powers in their alienated form and as liberatory forces. The current alienated form of the relationship between humanity and nature is determined by humanity's alienation from itself. It would be a tremendous mistake to assume that this relationship is a fixed essence of humanity, that is to say, that the development of human power is transhistorically inimical to nature. But that mistake is central to such theories as Ted Benton's "ecological reconstruction of Marx" (The Greening of Marxism, ed. Ted Benton, Guilford, 1996).

Contemporary radical theory is dominated by an overwhelming consciousness of defeat, and loss of confidence in human power as the power to transform society. It is grounded in actual history of revolutions that have failed or transformed into opposite, as in Russia, China and Iran.

However, those failures are too often theorized as the universal essence of human nature, so that—in

Ecosocialism and Marx's Humanism

anarcho-primitivism, deep ecology, most Green theory, and many radical theories influenced by postmodernism—liberation becomes defined less by the need for human development than by the need to limit human activity. This retreat from revolution is developed in theory as the impossibility of any transformation that results in true liberation.

Ted Benton counterposes human powers to transform things, on the one hand, to natural limits on the other. His theory recognizes these powers only in an alienated shape, that is, as powers embodied in capital. The aspects of human power that then stand out are its technological forms, the sheer scale of social production, and the great destruction wrought by them. His theory skips over the contradiction within human power itself: human beings themselves struggling against their domination by their own products. Such a theory sees only the negative side of subjectivity trying to make itself objective by exercising "human transforma-



tive powers." Therefore, the domination of object over subject is accepted as natural and eternal, rather than a social form of a specific historical stage, capitalism. So we end up with a theory that rejects the transcendence of exactly what we need to transcend to break capitalism's destructive law of motion.

In claiming that basic concepts of Marx's economic theory fall short of his philosophy's materialist premises, Benton repeats a fallacy common in Green critiques: acting as if Marx's description of how capitalism actually functions is a prescription for theory. That is, Marx shows how value, capital, and abstract labor, as driving forces of capitalism, abstract from nature and from all dimensions other than quantity of socially necessary labor time. The critics wrongly read this as a gap in Marx's theory. They then revise his theory, and end up pushing the human subject out of the center, and losing sight of the dialectical inversion of object over subject.

MARX'S CONCEPT OF VALUE

Marx did not use the word "value" in the psychological or moral sense of what is judged good or evil, useful or useless. When we say that only labor, not nature, determines value, it is not a denial of nature's worth or of the part it plays in production and life but a recognition of how capitalism functions.

The key is to grasp value as the form of appearance of objectified labor under the capitalist mode of production. Value, which is really the objective form taken by alienated labor, takes on a life of its own as the driving force of society and stands in opposition to workers, the subjects of labor. In other words, the dialectical inversion of object and subject is the expression of value as dead labor dominating living labor. It is seen strikingly in production where the machine is the material bearer of value, subjugating the worker.

Since labor, which is the universal condition for humanity's metabolism with nature, takes definite historical forms, the ahistorical concept of "domination of nature" is inadequate. To arrive at a historical notion, we must confront the specific character of domination inherent in society based on value production.

Labor in commodity production has a dual character: while concrete labor is the activity of making a definite kind of useful thing, it is abstract labor that produces value. The discipline of the factory clock reduces concrete individual labor with specific skills to value, an abstract mass of "socially necessary labor time." The process of production becomes value's act of self-production through the instrumentality of the machine's domination of the workers. The machine embodies value, dead labor, which acts as the subject and dominates the living laborer, who is turned into an object, an appendage to the machine. The appearance of domination in the contemporary society's irrational, destructive relationship to nature is actually the reflection of the subordination of both nature and humanity to capital.

At the same time, because it abstracts from nature,

mechanized value-driven production vastly increases the use of raw materials, draws in new materials such as petroleum, exhausts the fertility of the soil, and produces unprecedented amounts of waste. The scale of production is not limited by human needs but is driven by value's limitless drive to augment itself.

FOR USE-VALUE, OR A NEW KIND OF LABOR?

Ecosocialists have called for "a valorization of use-values over exchange-values" ("An Ecosocialist Manifesto," by Joel Kovel and Michael Lowy) and declared that "ecosocialism [is] a struggle for use-value" (*The Enemy of Nature* by Joel Kovel). Marx's socialism was never about use-value over exchange-value. He drove deeper to the forms of labor that produce use-value and value: concrete labor and abstract labor. This two-fold nature of labor in capitalist society is what Marx called, "the pivot on which a clear comprehension of political economy turns," yet it has played no part in ecosocialist theory. Without it, a theory cannot center on human activity, as alienated labor, as struggle against alienation, as the goal of a new society based on free self-activity.

This is compounded by the adoption by Kovel and others of the mystified concept of "intrinsic value" from Green theory. Passed off as an objective, trans-historical attribute of nature, "intrinsic value" is really a subjective attribute of human morality and psychology.

Posing value outside of its determination by alienated labor, and introducing "intrinsic value" as a spiritual essence floating outside humanity and beyond history, culminates in the old Green mystification of Nature as Subject. It goes back to an old idea, that human society's environmental destructiveness is due to an "anthropocentric" attitude, which must be fixed by putting nature at the center. That leads to displacing subjects of revolution, who can only be humans.

Other natural beings are seen in their capacity to suffer. Since social change cannot be left up to the action of non-human Nature, posing Nature as subject (or, as in "An Ecosocialist Manifesto," posing "the freeing of all beings as [a new society's] ground and goal") leads to human representatives acting on their behalf. This is no way to help spontaneous revolts of workers develop into the self-organization of a new society. One result is that the abolition of the division between mental and manual labor is missing from sketches of the new ecosocialist society, whether that be in Kovel's *The Enemy of Nature* or in any ecosocialist manifestos. Yet the need to begin breaking down that division even before the revolution, and certainly during and after it, is one of the foremost lessons of 20th Century revolutions.

WHO IS THE SUBJECT OF REVOLUTION?

The question of Subjects of revolution sheds light also on the critique of Marx's supposed "productivism," because he singled out the contradiction between productive forces and production relations. According to Michael Lowy in *Ecosocialism or Barbarism*, this is a "mechanistic scheme" that "should be replaced—or at least be completed—by the idea that productive forces in the capitalist system become destructive ones." Since Marx addresses the destructiveness of productive forces frequently in his writings, including in relation to the environment, Lowy should have asked why Marx did not elevate it as the primary contradiction. Lowy is harking back to the "second contradiction of capitalism" proposed by James O'Connor (*Natural Causes: Essays in Ecological Marxism*, Guilford, 1997): a contradiction between the forces and relations of production on the one hand and the conditions of production on the other.

In both cases, the proposed substitute lacks a human subject at its heart, so it lacks an active force internal to the contradiction that can transcend it. This throws out what is central to the creation of a new society: the self-developing Subject. Revising post-Marx Marxism without recapturing what Marx's philosophy of revolution had achieved ends up undermining the ability to help revolution continue to a new society.

Value dominates, but can never totally submerge, the human being. The revolt of the workers is the quest by human beings to reclaim their own subjectivity from the machine and posit their subjectivity as objective, in the form of revolutionary activity. Marx's argument— theorized by Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism as the projection of "new forces and new passions," including but not limited to labor, for reconstructing society on new beginnings—provides ground for comprehending today's multiple forces of revolution and mass opposition to environmental destruction as also challenging capitalism's perverse relationship of object over subject. The environmental movement has the potential to relate to other freedom movements on a deep, organic basis, rather than simply as tactical allies.

Ecosocialism's challenge to the capitalist concept of development needs to directly oppose the dialectical inversion of subject and object, and root itself in the potential of the self-developing Subject. Marx's dialectical approach, as reinterpreted for our day by Marxist-Humanism, is indispensable for arriving at that goal.

¹ *The Enemy of Nature*, by Joel Kovel (Zed Books, 2002), p. 209.

² From Marx's "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic."

iran

17 DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

At the demonstration of several thousands in the Bay Area on July 25, as part of the day of international solidarity with the movement in Iran, there was a whole gamut of people—from liberals in the government like Jerry Brown, to royalists—but there were mostly ordinary Iranian Americans expressing solidarity. There were very few leftists. We sold a large number of copies of *N&L* and got into some interesting discussions. The Left here, if not outright pro-Ahmadinejad and pro-Chavez, mostly seem leery they would otherwise be supporting U.S. imperialism.

At our meeting on "The Specter of Revolution in Iran," the highlight of the presentation was a contrast between the meaning of the struggle for open space for public discourse in Iran in the process of challenging the regime, and what public discourse means here—intellectuals debating each other. The speaker emphasized the need to give the movement space for development as opposed to trying to schoolmaster it.

Ron
Bay Area

Recent events in Iran can, indeed, be called "Seventeen days that shook the world" which is the title of the eyewitness report one of the speakers brought to our meeting on Iran. Nazanin also distributed a list, "The quandary of the American Left about the protests in Iran," challenging theoretical presuppositions on the Left that led it to hedge their support in the name of opposing U.S. imperialism. She brought out very profoundly the objectivity of the drive to be free as reflected in the unfolding total opposition among all segments of the population to Iran's theocratic rulers.

Marxist-Humanist
Bay Area

As someone who followed events online as they were unfolding in Iran, I witnessed not only the beautiful solidarity in which the world was participating but also the desperate need for philosophy. The first day of the revolt had barely ended when the virtually universal solidarity turned into everyone going their own way. Some were stuck on U.S. imperialism as the cause of everything, others argued that Israel/Palestine should be the main issue. To me, it spoke to the increased need for philosophy to be a guiding and foundational force for all solidarity action. That is especially true today when technology enables us to be closer than ever to events that happen on the other side of the world. The Lead article in the June-July *N&L* was a wonderful expression of how I believe revolutionaries in the U.S. should respond to just such a situation.

Brown Douglas
Urbana, Ill.

I would like to tell you about Mourning Mothers of Iran and invite you to support them. See their pictures and appeal at mothersoflaleh.blogspot.com.

Said Ashkan
saidashkan@yahoo.com

EXCHANGE WITH INTERNATIONAL ANTI-WAR ASSEMBLY IN JAPAN

Every August, on the anniversary of the U.S. atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an International Anti-war Assembly meets in Japan. It was with pride that our message to the 47th Assembly called attention to our long-established solidarity in the international anti-war struggle (see Editorial, p. 1):

"Like the worldwide economic crisis, the wars raging today grow out of the soil of a decaying capitalist system that has long since outlived its usefulness to humanity. Barack Obama, who began his run for president of the U.S. as an anti-war candidate but today holds the reins of commander-in-chief, is now repeating Bush's Iraq 'surge,' this time in Afghanistan...Nor can a truly anti-war alternative be found in

OPEN LETTER TO HUGO CHAVEZ

Millions of Iranians are protesting the election results and do not see Ahmadinejad's government as legitimate. Since June 12, the Iranian government has brutally attacked demonstrators and violated its own laws concerning peaceful demonstrations. The leaders of 13 worker unions are still in prison being tortured for the May Day protests in Iran.

You, unfortunately, decided to be the first president to congratulate him on his success...You have chosen to support Ahmadinejad, beyond the call of diplomacy and reason. Evo Morales and Castro are in much the same situation as you, but have not chosen to make fools of themselves by befriending this ruthless dictator.

Retract your support from Ahmadinejad, do not betray the people of both countries.

In solidarity with people of Venezuela and Iran, and to the Bolivarian dream.

Souzan Behjadai

NOTHING SETTLED?

It has been eight years since 11-year-old Timia Williams was beaten by three white Chicago police officers. The cops were given token suspensions, mostly paid vacations. Larry Marshall, her grandfather, returns every month to the Police Review Board meetings seeking justice. In July, the Board spokesman dared to say that the case was settled, too bad but "you have no recourse" here now. Mr. Marshall replied, "Nothing has been settled. Too many young kids are still being beaten, still getting shot, every day. This isn't just about one case, it's about all the cases of brutality. And I can keep coming down here until the end of time if I have to do that!"

Appreciative observer
Chicago

PROFESSOR GATES: 'NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER'

If, after having had trouble getting into my house, I had to prove my identity in my own home, I would probably have been highly indignant, and might have made comments that could have been better stated. Not having a "name, rank and serial number" such as Professor Gates has, I can only imagine the degree of disrespect he felt to his social/professional standing. But as a man, a Black man, I can fully understand the degree of denigration that an officer ("the man") can put you through.

It was good that he could call upon the office of the President of the USA, who arranged to "settle it over a beer." But what about all the rest of us? Until our Creator brings about a change, we have to attempt working it out in ways

the reactionary opponents of U.S. imperialism, from Al Qaeda to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the Chinese Communist Party. There is no sharp boundary between conflicts between states and the wars waged by rulers against their own people....We extend our strong solidarity with your call to 'unite across borders and rise in struggles against war and impoverishment, on the basis of proletarian internationalism.'"

The Resident Editorial Board of News
and Letters Committees

Thank you for your message to our Anti-war Assembly, which is very encouraging and significant for us. Let us go on fighting beyond the Ocean!

Akira Kato
for the Executive Committee

READERS'VIEWS

such as Marxist-Humanists would.

Ray Robeson
Detroit

The whole incident of Gates reminded me of when I was in a white neighborhood in Los Angeles, working as a nurse on a home visit. I was sitting in my car, writing up a just completed visit when suddenly two police cars appeared. One pulled in front of me and the other directly behind me. They wanted to know what I was doing. I explained and they responded by saying my back brake lights were on (I had my foot on the brake pedal) and that a driver working with a robber keeps the car ready for a fast take-off. After the incident, I spoke to the nursing office that sent me out and they called the police to tell them to stop bothering their nurses. I tell this story to say that the police do not harass only Black men, but Black women as well. I think the problem is not only the officers but the "higher-ups" who give permission for these actions.

Georgiana Stewart
Southern California

MAIN CURRENTS IN MARXISM

When Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski died, there was a lot of comment on his *Main Currents of Marxism*. It is a very significant work. But I've often wondered about its silence on Raya Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism, which was well known to him, as they were personal acquaintances. Sometimes it seems that he was trying to refute her views, as in his section on Gramsci. Other times I think he's leaving an opening for the possibility of a different view of Marxism, which could also mean that his entire thesis is wrong. In any case, his philosophic attitude in *Main Currents of Marxism* is basically the opposite of what she was to develop as the category of "post-Marx Marxism as a pejorative, beginning with Engels." He leaves us a monument and a silence, and she leaves a living body of ideas and a great historic responsibility.

Tim Finnigan
Illinois

ANTI-WAR
STRUGGLE CONTINUES

I received the following Call for protests, from the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space (PO Box 652, Brunswick, ME 04011):

"The U.S. arsenal of hypocrisy is poised for another launch from Vandenberg AFB in Southern California in the early morning hours of Aug. 23. Our government lectures and threatens Iran and North Korea about the evils of nuclear weapons and then arrogantly continues to fire nuclear missiles from California into the Pacific Ocean.

"The U.S. will launch high speed hair trigger Minuteman III nuclear weapon delivery systems from Vandenberg Space Command to Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The launch will be an operational test to verify the weapon system's reliability and accuracy. There will be protests at Vandenberg AFB as well as in El Segundo at the time of the launch. We urge people around the world to hold solidarity protests on either Aug. 22 or 23 to expose the hypocrisy of this U.S. nuclear test."

I am passing this Call on for your readers to join in on them.

January
Northern California

The unique event held in Illinois on Aug. 6, organized by the North Suburban Peace Initiative and The Fellowship of Reconciliation, was important as a determination not to let humanity ever

forget the tragic atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan. Activities were geared towards families with children. There was a potluck picnic, a film about a radiation-exposed girl who believed that making 1,000 origami cranes (which in Japanese lore brings good luck) would cure her. Along with showing *Sadako and the Thousand Cranes*, lessons were given for children to learn to make origami cranes. We must never forget, so that we will never repeat this history again.

Born in Japan
Illinois

WOMEN'S 'RIGHT TO BECOME'

The article, "Women's 'Right to Become'" in the June-July *N&L* conceptualizes how to combat society's condemnation of women: "I believe our time as a movement would be better spent talking about how to conceive ourselves as human, human beings who are in the process of becoming whole and free..." Bergonzi takes the arguments of anti-choicers and replaces them with visions of a positive ground for human development: "Let's stop talking about 'prevention' in terms of 'reducing abortions.' Let's talk about women's liberation and the power to determine our sexuality."

The mainstream Women's Liberation Movement has not done enough to make the abortion rights fight inseparable from other freedoms. It has allowed the Right to narrow "prevention" to mean "abortion reduction," rather than family planning. Black and Latina women led the fight for abortion in a context of women's freedom. Their experiences of substandard clinics and high costs, and of sterilization without consent led them to articulate the demand for "reproductive rights." In this context, "prevention" is not just for the purpose of reducing abortions, but a common-sense approach to a woman's control over her body.

Susan Van Gelder
New York

The focus of the WLM should not be on "prevention," should not be on talking *ad nauseum* about reducing abortions, because abortion is not the problem. The problem is women not having control over our bodies and lives and people who believe we don't have a right to that! When you look at it this way every kind of freedom comes into play: the ability to say "no"; choose to love another woman; raise a child in a safe, non-violent, non-toxic, healthy environment, in a world without poverty, war, sexism, racism. Freedom is what is at issue, not abortion, not prevention. Give us safe free birth control, give us sex education. Those are important in and of themselves, not just because they "reduce abortion."

Sonia Bergonzi
Chicago

There is not a single mainstream so-called "pro-life" group in the U.S. that supports contraception; most oppose it. They are so rabid that they purged anti-choice Congressman Tim Ryan because his idea of preventing abortion was to promote comprehensive sex education and make contraception widely available. For that he was thrown off the Board of Directors of "Democrats for life of America." He should thank the WLM, which has agitated around birth control and sex education throughout its 35+ year history, including exposing the danger of the pill and fighting against the forced sterilization of Puerto Rican, Chicana, Black and poor women. Too many forget this important history.

Terry Moon
Illinois

LABOR DOING SOME SERIOUS THINKING

I agree with your criticisms of unions but what is missing is any sort of game plan for how to get from here to there. What is a union member to do when faced with concessions or closure?

In the 1930s we had Joe Hill, the Wobblies, the One Big Union—and then we were "saved" by the war. At least there was some thinking going on, and some hope for a more just society. It seems much more bleak this time around where the official measure of health is the amount of (generally useless) consumption. Do we need to be reduced to the dust-bowl days before we try something else?

I would like to challenge union members to take back their unions. Attend meetings, start study classes, come up with a democratic platform that would NOT include raiding. What is the union brass paid? How about no more than the top rank-and-filer? How about strike pay being for all—those negotiating and those walking the line? Maybe then some serious thinking will happen—like what sort of society do we want?

Canadian Correspondent
Vancouver

I heard Armando Robles, the head of the Republic Windows and Doors local union, speak recently. Those workers went on a solidarity tour. They inspired others all over the world. Workers in several countries are talking about them. The labor specialist for *In These Times* has written that the Republic workers had failed to inspire other workers to a new wave of militancy. He wrote off the occupation. Armando had the opposite feeling. He asked how long it had been between the first sit-down in the 1930s and when it turned into the CIO. There is a debate between those giving up and those saying this could be just the beginning. It can't be just written off. There's a lot of thinking going on about what to do.

Student of History
Chicago

GAZA AND ISRAEL

I appreciate Raha's thoughts on Israel in the June-July Essay on "Gaza drowned in silence, despair and anguish," which took the perspective about the conflict in a universal and humanist direction. The bit about an "Arab Martin Luther King" was inspired. The perception of the spirit of movements as well as their mechanism, is the sign of a deeply humanist perspective. The crucial period in European history he has studied is important in understanding the historical ties between the Arab and Jewish world and the colonial legacy.

It reminded me of Manes Sperber, a Jewish Communist anti-Stalinist who survived Hitler and Stalin and lived to write about the experience of the 1930s and '40s, explaining what it meant for communists in Germany and East Europe. His novel *Teardrop in an Ocean* had a big impact on me while I was growing up in the 1980s in Iran. It was irreverent and it detailed Stalin, the war, and the devastation Communists endured when Stalin solidified his grip over the movement. At the end of the novel he points to exactly what Raha pointed to, the turning away, forgetting and blaming everything on National Socialism and its dangers.

Iranian Revolutionary
California

The highpoint of the essay on Gaza was the return to Israel's point of origin, tracing the tendency that took its cue for the idea of a socialist transformation from Marx's perspective on communal agrarian forms (kibbutzim) within civil society. It is no small issue that they skipped over social revolution, leaving the door open to statist Lassalleans, but they did come "oh so close," as it was put in the essay.

Ron Kelch
Bay Area, California

Two aspects of the essay on Gaza



and Israel require comment. First, the category of "historical Jews" is problematic, and is not my understanding of what the Marxist-Humanist analysis is. Second, it is an exaggeration to say that Israel in the 1940s came "oh so close to social revolution."

Close reader
Chicago

●

HATE CRIMES

The hate crime laws passed by the State of New York and the federal bill which has just passed both houses are a very bad idea. They create a category of "thought crime," and once that genie is out of the bottle it can go anywhere. We can't legislate people's thoughts and feelings. Punish the act, not the thought. Ideas, thoughts and emotions can't be regulated by the state, but are tested by the experience of real life. Hatred and bigotry are not "things" which one can beat up on, they are an expression of alienated social relations which need to be understood as such in order to be uprooted and transcended.

These laws will give new repressive weapons to our rulers which can and most certainly will be used against the very people who have called for their passage.

D. Cheneville
SF-Oakland Bay Area

I have read in the press that the Matthew Shepard Act is closer than ever to becoming reality. As part of the Senate's Department of Defense legislation, it awaits President Obama's signature. May the President sign this legislation which will add LGBT and disabled individuals as protected from physical acts of harm and death, without taking away people's rights of free thought and speech. Deep thanks for your regular "Queer Notes" column by Elise, which keeps us abreast of important developments in the LGBT rights movement.

Pritpal Kaur
Chicago

VOICES FROM WITHIN

Thanks for your commitment to the critical and practical perspective you initiate in the minds of those like myself without which we would solely depend on choreographed reactions to the mainstream propaganda-based media. N&L presents an opportunity to read news generated not for the sole purpose of furthering corporate-owned ideas through corporate-owned media. Thanks!

Prisoner
Texas

Your paper was passed on to me by an elder here in South Carolina who thinks highly of me and stressed that I make use of it. Many of us suffer the "Ostrich Syndrome." We continuously bury our heads in the sand, choosing to ignore certain realities in hopes they will go away.

Justice doesn't always prevail, and when it doesn't, situations and circumstances are unjust. That alone is oppression. Proper education corrects errors. We have to take the slave chains off our minds. I see myself beyond prison. I'll continue to strive for peace, patience, and perseverance. It is why I want to continue reading *N&L*. I am hungry for ripe fruits.

Prisoner
South Carolina

While it's true that *N&L* gives prisoners accurate information on freedom struggles around the world, prisoners who write to *N&L* give hope as they reveal their freedom struggles in the system of injustice, share *N&L* with other prisoners, and start discussions in their prisons. The "reader's view" from Robert Taliaferro in the June-July issue reinforces the way *N&L* is a needed part of the struggle for human liberation—and does its part in terms understandable to the "everyday" human being, who is the freedom struggler.

Yumi
Chicago

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Van der Linden's *Western Marxism and the USSR*

Western Marxism and the Soviet Union: A Survey of Critical Theories and Debates Since 1917, by Marcel van der Linden (Haymarket Books, 2009).

The "Russian Question"—shorthand for the analysis of the class nature of the USSR—was a dividing line in the international Marxist movement no less important than that of attitudes toward the outbreak of World War I in August 1914. The question was at the root of a major split in U.S. Trotskyism in 1940, played an important role in attempts to give the Chinese side of the Sino-Soviet split a theoretical content, and continues to have relevance more than a decade after the collapse of "actually existing socialism" in debates over the possibility of organizing society on a non-capitalist basis.

Marcel van der Linden of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, has made a major contribution to the study of Marxist analyses of the USSR in his book *Western Marxism and the Soviet Union: A Survey of Critical Theories and Debates Since 1917*, revised and enlarged from a 1992 German edition.

Van der Linden's book is an exhaustive review of critical analyses of the social and economic structure of the USSR, stretching from the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution of 1917 to the final dissolution of the system in 1991. One of the great merits of the work is the presentation of a large number of non-English language arguments to an English-speaking audience, although the author excludes Asian and African theorists from his scope.

NEW PERSPECTIVE GAINED

Readers of the book will gain a new perspective on such major figures of international Marxism as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Kautsky, as well as an introduction to arguments of obscure but important theorists such as Ryan Worrall, an Australian Trotskyist who published an analysis of the USSR as a capitalist state in V.F. Calverton's *Modern Quarterly* in 1939. Van der Linden also includes at least one important thinker not usually associated with the debate, the philosopher Simone Weil.

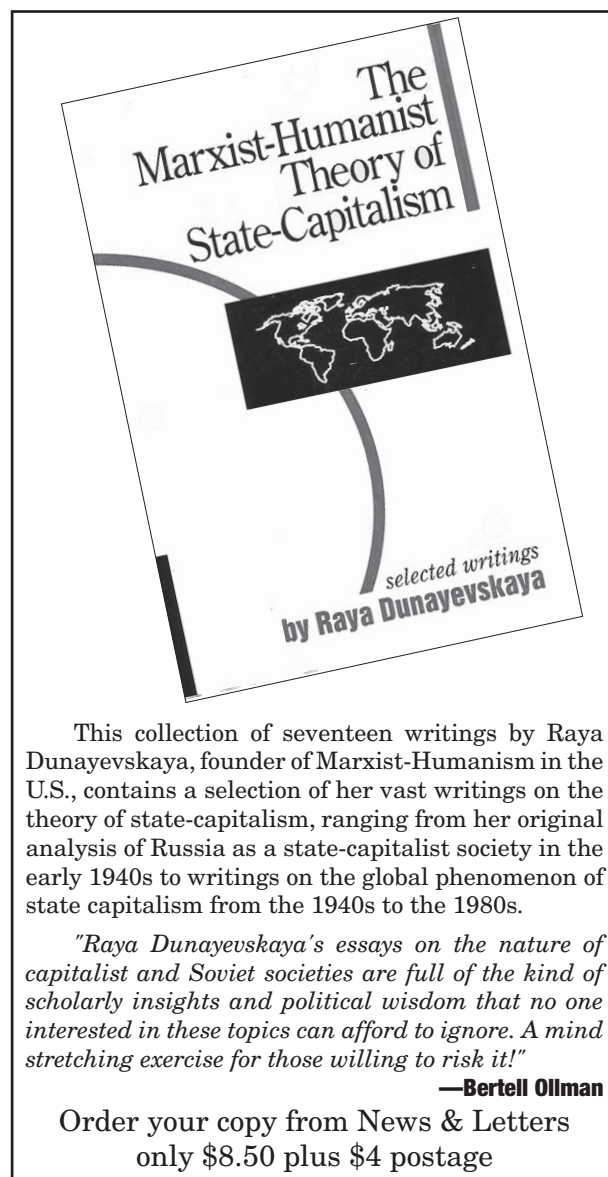
Van der Linden groups the arguments into four rough categories: theories of the USSR as a new type of society, theories of state capitalism, the degenerated workers' state theory, and other theories not as readily classifiable.

The theory of the USSR as a product of a new mode of production originated with a book published in French in 1939 by the Italian theorist Bruno Rizzi called *The Bureaucratization of the World*. The basic thrust of Rizzi's argument was that the USSR had become a society not foreseen by Marx, one that was neither capitalist nor socialist, but instead characterized by class domination despite the absence of private ownership of the means of production—a development he called bureaucratic collectivism. Trotsky, the chief proponent of the degenerated workers' state position, was harshly critical of Rizzi's theory, but it took on a life of its own among a section of U.S. Trotskyists and contributed to a 1940 split that gave birth to the Workers Party.

STATE-CAPITALIST THEORY IN CONTENTION

The American version (or versions, to be more precise) of the bureaucratic collectivism theory, championed by Max Shachtman and Joe Carter, were in turn

fiercely criticized within the Workers Party by Raya Dunayevskaya and C.L.R. James, who had independently reached an analysis of the USSR as a society dominated by all the economic laws present in the private-property form of capitalism. Dunayevskaya pointed out that the adherents of bureaucratic collectivism were, like Trotsky, disoriented by their focus on the absence of private ownership of the means of production, rather



This collection of seventeen writings by Raya Dunayevskaya, founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., contains a selection of her vast writings on the theory of state-capitalism, ranging from her original analysis of Russia as a state-capitalist society in the early 1940s to writings on the global phenomenon of state capitalism from the 1940s to the 1980s.

"Raya Dunayevskaya's essays on the nature of capitalist and Soviet societies are full of the kind of scholarly insights and political wisdom that no one interested in these topics can afford to ignore. A mind stretching exercise for those willing to risk it!"

—Bertell Ollman

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than the relations prevailing at the point of production.

Unfortunately, Van der Linden devotes to neither Dunayevskaya nor James the space each deserves in his account of the theory of state capitalism. He instead defaults to the version of the theory put forth later by Tony Cliff and his followers. Van der Linden does however give Dunayevskaya credit for rooting her theory directly in Marx's critique of capitalism, most profoundly in her recognition that despite what Rizzi and other critics thought, Marx had indeed allowed for the theoretical possibility of what had taken place in the USSR. She noted that Marx wrote explicitly in volume I of *Capital* of the ultimate limit of the centralization of capital: "In a given society, this limit would be reached if all social capital were concentrated in the

same hands whether those of an individual capitalist or those of a single capitalist society." Furthermore, what is most important for Marx in Dunayevskaya's view is that "this extreme development would in no way change the law of motion of that society."

DOES LAW OF VALUE OPERATE IN THE USSR?

Dunayevskaya's analysis differs sharply from that of Cliff, who held both that the law of value was not in effect in the USSR and that economic competition took place between the USSR and the rest of the capitalist world solely in the form of the arms race. Dunayevskaya maintained that the USSR was capitalist precisely because the law of value prevailed in the economy. Because this was so, the socially necessary labor time required to produce commodities was the same inside Russian factories as it was in U.S. ones. As she wrote in an analysis published in 1946, "The value of capital in the surrounding world is constantly depreciating which means that the value of capital inside the capitalist society [Russia] is constantly depreciating." This reality made the statified economy of the USSR every bit as unstable as the economies of the private capitalist world.

The treatment of the state capitalist theory in the book would have been greatly improved had the author taken up Dunayevskaya's criticism of a major statement of Stalinist economics, "Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union," which was translated by her and published in the *American Economic Review* in 1944. The Russian piece explicitly details the identity of capitalism with socialism in Stalinist practice and attempts to obfuscate the relationship with a thoroughgoing distortion of Marx's concepts.

Van der Linden revisits Cliff and his co-thinkers throughout his book as the sole developers of the theory of state capitalism throughout the post-war years, ignoring Dunayevskaya's many contributions after her analyses of the 1940s. In this period, after what she considered to be her groundbreaking studies of the philosophical Absolutes of Hegel in 1953, Dunayevskaya came to believe that reaching a correct analysis of the Russian economy was inadequate without an accompanying development of the philosophic content of Marxism itself, rooted in the humanism of Marx and the mass revolts of the post-war period. Many of these relevant texts can be read in the 1991 collection *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism*.

The importance of the Russian question persists because any serious discussion of it brings one to a direct confrontation with the categories of Marx's critique of political economy. Although the particular forms of appearance of capitalism in the USSR have long since dissipated, studying them can bring us to a better understanding of the essential reality behind them. Despite its drawbacks, Van der Linden's book is a welcome contribution to that effort.

BLACK/REDVIEW

continued from p. 1

"quality education" by threats of physical annihilation. Just outside of Boston, Harvard University seeks, by intellectual absolutism, to deny any intellectual understanding of the role of Black people in U.S. history and culture.

Harvard is not the only university engaged in the retrogressive act of curtailing and disciplining their Black Studies departments, in the name of academic efficiency and scholarship.

If an analogy could be drawn of this situation, it would be akin to what happened during the Reconstruction period. At that time, the Black Revolution was left incomplete and the reactionary planter class was able to reassert its powers.

BLACK REVOLT OF THE 1960s

The tragic result was that racism hung like a pall over Black Americans for generations, until in the 1960s the masses of Blacks were able to break triumphantly through on the issue of civil rights. The historical dynamics of this mass movement changed the very status of Black intellectuals by compelling the big white universities to set up Black Studies departments and to hire Black professors to teach the true role of Black people in U.S. history.

Once again we face a period of reaction. This time it is the Nixon-Ford "reconstruction" that would roll back the gains which the mass Black revolts achieved. The extensiveness of this racism caused elements of the "new Left" to consider that the near lynching of a Black man in South Boston during a school integration protest, was "really a protest against big government!"

Our only hope is for the emergence of a new Black mass movement, not from where it began in the 1960s, but from a new beginning, one that will forge a unity of Blacks, workers, women, oppressed minorities, intellectuals, students and all others who are necessary to end capitalism in the U.S. and build toward a society that recognizes no one is free, until all are free!

Torture in Chicago under Jon Burge

Chicago—A panel discussion on "Torture in Chicago: The Burge Case" was held at Roosevelt University. It drew necessary connections between the racist police brutality that has existed in Chicago and the direct relation it has to imperialist wars abroad.

John Conroy, a *Chicago Reader* reporter who has covered the Burge case, described Burge's background in high school ROTC, how he became involved in torture in the army and his record of torture while in the Chicago Police Department. The number of his torture victims stands at 108. Twenty five men remain in prison on the basis of questionable confessions.

The city admitted torture had occurred by 1994, but a special prosecutor wasn't appointed until 2002. In 2006, the prosecutor concluded that although torture had occurred the statute of limitations had passed. In 2008 a Federal indictment was issued by U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald. Burge continues to receive full pension benefits.

Darrell Cannon described his experiences as a victim of torture: "I was tortured 24 years ago, 1983. A group of Detectives kicked in my front door. They said, 'We have scientific way of interrogating N—s.' They took me to an isolated area near the Wisconsin Steel Mill, drove the police car into a big pipe while another car blocked the entrance. First they tried to hang me from my arms while my hands were cuffed behind my back. They couldn't do it. Then they took a shotgun—we were in a rural area, he said, 'No one can see or hear you.' He put the shotgun in my mouth and said, 'Go ahead, blow that N—'s head off.'

"They took me to the side of the car, put the gun

to the side of my head. Then put me in the car, pulled my pants and shorts down, made me lay down and put the cattle prod to my genitals. They kept doing this. To me it was like eternity. So barbaric. They tried to step on my feet to keep me from kicking. All three enjoyed everything they did. Not one of them looked like they should maybe slow down. My name was not Darrell Cannon, it was N—, N—, N—, N—. They enjoyed it so much they lost track of time, kept at it past their quitting time.

"You would say anything to stop the torture. Even if you weren't guilty, you became guilty. Today I feel just as bitter as I did in 1983. People ask if I hate the detectives that tortured me? Yes, I do! I was locked up for 24 years, I lost my Mother, Father—all my family members, I was never allowed to see them one more time. The system tried to drive me crazy. The last nine years I was in Tamms Supermax. Everything you do, you do by yourself. Having lost all my family to the Death Angels, and not seeing them one last time, I live with that every day and that fuels my hatred of these detectives. I have a reason to have nothing but hatred.

"But I wouldn't allow that torture to turn into anything violent. You can't say you 'serve and protect,' when you torture. I channel my hatred by asking you to get involved. I refuse not to speak up.

"They didn't release me even after all the charges were dropped as the parole board stepped in and it took an additional three years of struggle. It happened April 30th. Today is my anniversary of being home. If you don't stay the course you won't get no justice."

—Gerry Emmett

Honduras: coup and resistance

The military-Liberal Party-business elite coup that deposed President Manuel Zelaya in the middle of the night on June 28 has yet to run its course. What is key at the present moment is the ongoing resistance within Honduras that has taken a number of creative forms. As well, there is the looming presence of the U.S. (See accompanying article, below.)

The coup leaders immediately imposed martial law, closed broadcast stations, arrested journalists and hundreds of demonstrators and shot protesters, murdering two. Coup leader Roberto Micheletti proclaimed himself President, but is in effect the new dictator. Negotiations in Costa Rica broke down quickly as Micheletti refused to consider Zelaya's return as President.

The Honduras military and the Right had proclaimed for months that Zelaya wanted to impose a "Hugo Chavez" solution. Using the excuse that Zelaya "violated the Constitution" by asking for a consultative vote on possible changes to the constitution, the coup was carried out. It is not Chavez's influence that the business elite, the established Party and Church hierarchies fear; it is their own Honduran masses, living in deep poverty and social instability for decades. In Zelaya they saw someone who at least was willing to listen to their concerns and begin to push for some incremental changes in their lives.

The crucial turning point that the coup birthed is not the imposition of the right-wing dictatorial rule enforced by the military and the police. Rather, it is the mobilization of the masses in opposition to the coup. One saw it in the thousands upon thousands who streamed to the airport to await the arrival of Zelaya. The military blocked the runway, and fired into the demonstrators. Two were killed, including 19-year-old Isis Obed Murillo, shot in the back of the head. As a *Miami Herald* headline proclaimed: "Honduran teen's slaying propels youth movement."

The July 13 article noted: "The teenager's name and the images of his bloody body being carried away from the scene have now become a rallying point for those against the post-Zelaya government. Graffiti bearing Isis's name has been spray-painted on city walls with words calling for Zelaya's return. 'He was just a kid standing up for his rights,' said José Miguel Otero, 23, at a recent pro-Zelaya march down one of Tegucigalpa's main streets. 'His sacrifice has now given others like me the courage to continue standing up for what we believe in.'...Just a day after Zelaya's removal, [Isis] started making the roughly 30-mile journey to

central Tegucigalpa to join the Zelaya rallies."

The struggle has involved workers, particularly teachers, women, and many different citizens' groups. All have come together in blockading streets and highways throughout Honduras. Thousands have participated in these unarmed protests, often met by the armed state. Many teachers' unions have suspended classes and are striking. One leader, Lina Pineda noted, "Besides suspending classes, we are going to block roads, because the resistance will continue. We are completely united, and we are not going to stop until the coup-mongers leave."

Juan Barahona, a founder and leader of the National Front Against the Coup, said: "The other thing we can't give up is our right to hold a constitutional assembly. That's a right we have been fighting for over

these past days of actions that we won't give up." A call for a constitutional assembly lies at the heart of the differences between the wealthy oligarchy, backed by the Armed Forces, and the farmer, worker and Indigenous organizations that look to change the constitution to guarantee a more just distribution of wealth in the sharply unequal nation.

Women have been very active in the protests. In the capital, Tegucigalpa, thousands

of demonstrators protested in front of the Honduran Women's Institute, which coup officials had taken over. A report from Rights Action, a solidarity group working inside Honduras, reported on the actions to protect President Zelaya's home: "On July 17, when townspeople [of Catacamas] learned that the military had surrounded the president's family house, more than 4,000 protesters marched to the house to take it back. When confronted by the crowd, the 50 or so soldiers quietly retreated. Since then, the pro-democracy movement in Catacamas has maintained a constant vigil at the president's residence. The home has become a symbol of popular resistance. Hundreds of people from communities around the state of Olancho gather here daily to guard the property and wait anxiously for the return of President Zelaya. Military planes and police helicopters circle in the skies above the crowd—an ominous reminder of the powers they're confronting."

Certainly support for the return of Zelaya is a central demand of the protests. But the social movements inside Honduras today are reaching for more than a restoration of his presidency. They are looking for and acting to bring forth a new beginning in Honduran society.

—Eugene Walker

Honduras and the U.S.: long, tragic history

The military coup currently being played out in Honduras brings to the fore the history of U.S. military occupations and the political-economic domination of Central America in general, and Honduras in particular. Though the Obama administration critiqued the coup—which did mark a change from the century-plus U.S. role in Central America—its response has been tepid. One segment of U.S. aid, \$16.5 million in military aid, has been suspended.

But security aid, \$42 million in development aid, and training for Honduran military officers in the U.S.'s infamous School of the Americas (renamed Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation), continue. It remains to be seen how serious the U.S. is in mobilizing its dominant influence to roll back this coup. While the new administration may not have played any direct role in allowing the coup to go forward and may even have opposed its implementation, the greater truth is that a century-plus of U.S. imperialist actions in Honduras laid the ground.

- The Spanish-American War of 1898 opened nearly 25 years of active military presence in Honduras. It coincided with the economic invasion by the Standard Fruit Company followed by the United Fruit Company. The U.S. Marines were sent in more than half a dozen times from 1903 to 1925 to protect U.S. business interests, prop up or manipulate corrupt governments, oppress any opposition. Complete control of banana exports, arranging huge land holdings, domination of the railroad, and the Marines, all characterized Honduran-U.S. relations.

- A new assault began after World War II. In Guatemala, a U.S.-CIA coup was carried out against a moderately progressive government in 1954. The U.S. saw Central America and the Caribbean only through its myopic anti-Communist lens. This could not halt the revolution in Cuba, nor Central American revolts. When Reagan took office, he was determined to destroy the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua as well as back

the Rightist military and its death squads in El Salvador's civil war. Honduras was key to Reagan's Central American militarism. In 1982, U.S.-backed Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries, or "Contras," launched operations to bring down Nicaragua's Sandinista government from Honduran territory. U.S.-run training camps against Salvadoran revolutionaries were also put in place. Between 1981 and 1985, U.S. military aid to Honduras escalated from \$4 million to over \$77 million. A number of Honduran military officers involved in the coup were trained in the School of the Americas attended by hundreds upon hundreds of Latin American military over the years. It would take most of the 1990s to even partially de-militarize Honduras.

- A new "invasion" of Honduras began by the mid-1980s in the form of neoliberal economic policies. The export economy, with its maquiladoras (assembly plants in free-trade zones), particularly manufacturing knit and woven apparel with dirt-cheap labor costs was the new future. The basic economic framework of the original banana plantation was repeated with new products, but with the same reliance on the sweated, exploited, underpaid labor of women and men. A 2008 UN report said seven of ten Hondurans were living in poverty. Unable to make a living in their own country, an estimated 800,000 now reside in the U.S.

It is in the context of this history and present reality that the Honduran workers, peasants, Afro-Hondurans, youth, and women have been struggling to change their conditions of life and labor. They tried to do so by electing Manuel Zelaya with his call for "citizen power." Yet even so mild a democratic movement for change threatened the old oligarchy, feeding from the neoliberal economic trough, and their military enforcers. Where lies the historical responsibility of the U.S. for shaping such a poverty-ridden, unequal and unfree reality? And what will the U.S. do at this moment of coup and popular outrage against it?

—E.W.

Constant toxic danger

Williston, S.C.—A toxic fog of ammonia leaked from the Tanner Industries plant near Swansea, S.C., on July 15, killing Jacqueline Patrice Ginyard, 38, sending seven people to hospitals and prompting evacuation of nearby homes.

It brought back memories of Jan. 6, 2005, in Graniteville, S.C., when two trains derailed, releasing 90 tons of chlorine gas. Nine people died, at least 250 were made sick, and 5,400 residents within a mile of the crash site were forced to evacuate for nearly two weeks.

These dangers are all across South Carolina. Toxic waste sites are most harmful to our children and our elderly. Out of sight, out of mind. The people of Williston, 20 to 30 miles from both Swansea and Graniteville, live their lives in constant danger. The contaminated Savannah River nuclear site, Vogtle nuclear power plant and many others are close to Williston. Until the Department of Health and Environmental Control or Region IV Environmental Protection Agency steps up to educate these people on the dangers of these chemicals and radiation, most people in Williston, as well as many in South Carolina, live in darkness. Many do not understand that 20 to 30 miles is next door. We live in a Third World country environment.

—African-American correspondent

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Israeli Gays and their supporters rallied in Tel Aviv, Israel, Aug. 2 against the worst homophobic attack ever in that country. The day before, a masked gunman murdered two and wounded ten people at a GLBT youth center. The gunman remains at large.

* * *

A colorful and festive Pride Parade in New Delhi, India, in late June was attended by more than 1,500 Gays, Lesbians and their supporters. They were anticipating the July 2 ruling by the Delhi High Court decriminalizing gay sex, which applies only in New Delhi, but could impact all India. This ruling overturns the law banning homosexual sex established 150 years ago during Great Britain's oppressive colonial rule.

* * *

Transgender people should have equal benefits from the government, Pakistan's Supreme Court recently ruled. Income support programs and social welfare departments for those in need and protection by police from violence were among the kinds of benefits specifically mentioned in the Supreme Court's opinion.

* * *

In the U.S., hate crimes legislation inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity and disability looks like it will be signed into law. The legislation was attached as an amendment to a Senate Department of Defense bill, but President Obama threatened to veto it if funding for F-22 fighter jets wasn't deleted. The Senate deleted the funding.

* * *

An Equality March on Washington, D.C., demanding full equality will take place on Oct. 11 to coincide with National Coming Out Day. The March was announced by Cleve Jones, a protégé of Harvey Milk and founder of the NAMES Project/AIDS memorial quilt, and is being organized by Equality Across America.

* * *

In Eastern Europe, a region notorious for homophobia, newly elected President Dalia Grybauskaite of Lithuania condemned the Law on Protection of Minors, which bans materials about homosexuality. Former President Valdas Adamkus vetoed the bill, calling it "a clear breach of the EU's (European Union's) fundamental rights and principles." But Lithuania's legislature overrode Adamkus's veto.

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Recession spawns unemployment, suffering and revolt

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vestors had driven the stock market up 30% from the end of 2008 lows. Many of the business reports that had stoked the misplaced optimism came from major banks—which had recently taken huge cash infusions from TARP, the Troubled Assets Relief Program, to head off a possible complete collapse of the capitalist economy. Increased profits at non-financial companies are the result of cost-cutting measures, such as layoffs, rather than expansion or increased output.

Recently, several large banks, Goldman Sachs, J.P. Morgan, American Express, and Morgan Stanley—eager to escape federal limits on compensation for top executives—declared themselves healthy enough to exit TARP and were granted permission by the Obama administration. Yet, as Eric Dash noted June 10 in *The New York Times*:

"...after banks return the TARP money, the administration will forfeit much of its leverage over them. With that loss goes a rare opportunity to overhaul the industry."

While May had marked the fourth consecutive decline in the rate of monthly job losses, in June such losses rebounded to 467,000 from May's 345,000. The U.S. unemployment rate hit 9.5%, a 26-year high. More telling, the average work week fell to 33 hours per week, the lowest since records began in 1964.

Other bad news includes an increase in the number of long-term unemployed, to 4.4 million, also an all-time high. If laid-off workers not counted as looking for employment or those who have settled for part-time work are counted, the unemployment rate for June was 16.5%. In the July report nearly 250,000 more jobs disappeared; the unemployment rate dipped slightly to 9.4%, only because 422,000 more people were no longer counted in the workforce. Since late 2007, 6.7 million jobs have been lost, 5% of the total, the worst decline since the Great Depression.

The full impact of the Great Recession on Black and Latino workers has yet to be acknowledged. In the last year, official unemployment among Blacks increased from 8.9% to 13.6% compared to the increase for whites from 4.8% to 8.2%.

HOUSING MARKET COLLAPSE

If job losses are the core of the current economic crisis, more visible has been the housing market collapse. Only the logic of the capital/labor relation can

explain the apparently irrational actions of capital and the state in the housing markets. The Obama administration's major program, "Making Home Affordable," aimed at stemming foreclosures. Beginning in April, home mortgage servicers signed on to the program, wherein they received a \$1,000 fee for each loan they modified. But figures for April, May and June showed a decline in modifications. Analysis of 3.5 million subprime loans, written in 2005-2007 by the biggest banks, showed that 2009 modifications peaked in February and then declined in all but one month since.

In June \$45 million was lost in write-downs of principal, interest, or fees; \$4.5 billion was lost in foreclosures. Alan M. White, who analyzed this data, said: "There is 100 times as much money lost in foreclosure sales as there was in writing down balances in modifications—this is not rational economic behavior" (Gretchen Morgenson, "So Many Foreclosures, So Little Logic," 7/5/09 *The New York Times*). **The conclusion is that large banks have no confidence in the ability of U.S. workers to make their house payments, and have more confidence that the same workers will—as taxpayers—bail the banks out for the losses that continue to fester and accumulate on their books.**



Workers, most from West Africa, protested Scoop NYC, the trendy retail store in SoHo, in July against racial discrimination and labor violations including refusal to pay overtime.

Diane Krauthamer / NLN

Capitalists remain confident that the socially produced wealth will continue to be transferred at an accelerating rate to those Marx called "the trustees of bourgeois society."

This transfer of wealth will continue to involve even the unemployed workers, through house foreclosures and loss of equity.

MARX'S THEORY: LABOR TURNS INTO OBJECT

Marx worked out his theory of capitalist society, not only the exploitation of workers for the material and intellectual advantages of the non-workers, but the actual transformation of labor into an object, which served as the foundation for the predominance of things over people.

Under the logic of capitalism people exist to serve things, not things to serve human interests. In this sense, with capitalist social relations, the logic has been impeccable—"real estate," as a commodity, is a mere form of appearance of capital, the bankers and state functionaries its "personifications."

Given these conditions, the achievements of the workers and supporters at Stella D'Oro factory in the Bronx reveal workers' determination to fight back, us-

Nuclear reactors threaten civilization

Los Angeles—After the 2000 Presidential election, the Bush administration campaigned to restart building nuclear power plants in the U.S. and abroad. Since the 1979 near-meltdown at the Three Mile Island reactor in Pennsylvania and the 1986 meltdown at Chernobyl, Ukraine, the nuclear power industry has built few reactors. The Chernobyl meltdown devastated 100,000 square miles of land and water in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus with highly toxic radiation, causing massive deaths, diseases and abnormalities. The breadbaskets in those areas have been contaminated with radiation forever.

In May 2001 Vice President Cheney stated: "[Nuclear power] is a very important part of our energy policy today in the U.S....America's electricity is already being provided through the nuclear industry efficiently, safely and with no discharge of greenhouse gases or emissions."

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION FAVORS NUKES

Maurine Doerken's *One Bomb Away* listed 34 nuclear plant accidents from 1952 to 2000. Helen Caldicott, in *Nuclear Power Is Not the Answer*, shows how uranium mining, milling, transporting, enriching, construction of reactors, storage of wastes, etc., uses massive amounts of energy, mostly fossil fuel which emits greenhouse gas. In addition, uranium enrichment emits huge amounts of chlorofluorocarbon, a gas which destroys the ozone layer in the stratosphere. The ozone layer filters out the sun's deadly UV rays.

During Secretary of State Clinton's July trip to India, it was reported that India bought two nuclear power plants to be built by GE or Westinghouse Corporation. And recently Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced that his Department would hurry the approval for \$18.5 billion in federal loan guarantees for utilities building nuclear plants. The Obama administration is favoring nuclear power over solar and wind power.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has received 17 applications to build 26 new power plants and many applications for uranium mining permits.

There are large amounts of uranium beneath the thousands of acres on and around the lands of the Na-

vajo Nation (Diné) and other Indian pueblos in northwestern New Mexico. The Navajo Nation, other American Indian tribes and the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE) are fighting to block uranium mining. MASE is composed of Hispanics, American Indians and Anglos, from five grassroots organizations.

Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., stated, "I don't believe there is any safe technology that can be used to mine uranium. Many of my people died because of mining of uranium.... It is devastating, it has wrecked the lives of our families....The tribe will continue to fight the state and federal agencies that grant permits to uranium companies despite the opposition of the American Indian Countries."

Linda Evers, a former miner, miller and ore hauler, is a member of MASE who contracted degenerative bone disease. She said, "My daughter was born with no hips at all..." Edith Hood, who lives in the area and contracted lymphoma in 2006, implored Congress to halt the NRC's approval of new mines. She spoke of pulmonary fibrosis and other illnesses in the area.

Long-term exposure to uranium (uranium tailings are left in huge piles after milling) or its by-product, radium, may cause anemia, cataracts, bone cancer, etc. The Dinés and MASE also oppose uranium mining because it contaminates springs, rivers and aquifers, their source of drinking water and crop irrigation.

NUCLEAR POWER IS NEVER SAFE

Nuclear power plants fuel global warming. The process of building and running them is not safe, nor has the problem of how to safely dispose of tons of deadly nuclear waste with hundreds of thousands of years of half-life been solved. A 1,000-megawatt nuclear reactor produces 500 pounds of plutonium yearly. Ten pounds is enough fuel for an atomic bomb.

Iran's nuclear program raises the tension between Israel and Iran. North Korea's nuclear program raises tensions in the North Korea/Japan relationship and endangers the world even more. As Raya Dunayevskaya stated in the July 1961 *N&L*, "The new weapons system is not just a new form of 'blitzkrieg.' Rather, it threatens the extinction of civilization altogether." —Basho

ing whatever resources they have (see p. 3). Mike Filipo, who spent 11 months on the picket lines while participating in myriad community forums and protests, said:

"It was tough—for many going from \$700-\$800 a week in wages to the \$400 in unemployment benefits. Even the unemployment benefits were the result of a fight. We were the first group of workers to claim benefits on the grounds that the company had hired temporary replacement workers. A lot of us would have lost our homes—there are married couples that have been working here for as long as 30 or so years. We made sure everyone knew how to use every protection—including programs for mortgage payment reductions to avoid foreclosure—but even these don't work forever."

HEALTHCARE WORKERS ATTACKED

While the Obama Administration, and many activists, prepare for the "final battle" over health insurance reform, healthcare workers may be preparing to pay a high price in deteriorating working conditions, unemployment, and cuts in pay and benefits. For instance, a July 20 "settlement" between 1199 East, affiliated with Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the League of Voluntary Hospitals and Homes of New York nullifies a 3% raise due this year and part of another raise in 2010.

Even though healthcare is one sector that is expected to expand, so are the attacks on healthcare workers. After more than a decade of protracted struggles for quality care in organized campaigns and in persistent everyday fights over staffing levels, healthcare workers at Kaiser HMO on the West Coast are being hit with rumors of forced reductions in the face of the new economic climate and projected cuts due to healthcare "reform." In the healthcare workplace the dominance of capital over living labor is reflected in the shift in the healthcare debate from one of providing universal care to starving that sector of resources in order to meet the needs of capital. (See "Workshop Talks," page 1.)

On July 24 the federal minimum hourly wage was increased to \$7.25—about \$15,000 a year. A recent report from the U.S. Department of Labor, "Tomorrow's Jobs," indicates that half of the ten occupations expected to add the most jobs through 2016, e.g., retail sales positions and home health aides, will be "very low paying," a maximum of \$22,000 a year. Three more of the highest growth occupations are to be "low-paying," up to only \$31,000 a year.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER RECESSION?

Everything points to a "jobless recovery" like no other. Workers are experiencing soaring unemployment, reduced hours, and forced part-time jobs. These represent involuntary "free time," the result of what Marx called "value production"—in which the self-development of people and material well-being are nothing but its by-product. These kinds of increases in free time are all about restoring, preserving, and perpetuating the capitalist mode of production. The worst thing we can do, however, is to stop there, and fail to follow the logic of capital to its conclusion, to Marx's look ahead to post-capitalist society:

"It is one of the civilizing aspects of capital that it extorts...surplus labor in a manner [as surplus value] and in conditions that are more advantageous to social relations and to the creation of elements for a new and higher formation than was the case under the earlier forms of slavery, serfdom, etc. Thus on the one hand it leads towards a stage at which compulsion and the monopolization of social development (with its material and intellectual advantages) by one section of society at the expense of another disappears; on the other hand it creates the material means and the nucleus for relations that permit this surplus labor to be combined, in a higher form of society, with a greater reduction of the overall time devoted to material labor... The true realm of freedom, the development of human powers as an end in itself, begins beyond it [labor in material production, realm of necessity], though it can only flourish with this realm of necessity as its basis. The reduction of the working day is the basic prerequisite" (Marx, Capital, Vol. III, pp. 958-959).

The post-capitalist dialectic of the "realm of necessity" as the basis for the realm of freedom that Marx describes is intrinsic to the social revolution in which, *"the individual [becomes] a social individual with a new mass-power-form in cooperative labor so that [the workers' plan], as contrasted to the despotic plan of capitalism, meant the accomplishment of a task 'with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most adequate to their human nature and most worthy of it'" (Dunayevskaya, The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism, p. 96).* Clearly this dialectic of time for human self-development and free time is the total opposite of the reduction of time in production we see in capitalism's direction now in the miseries of deteriorating working conditions and ever-increasing unemployment.

The continuing struggle in Iran

On the 40th day marking the murder of Neda Agha Soltan and others who were slain, tens of thousands of Iranians came out in Tehran to mourn and protest in a bold and creative display of people's power. Despite scorching 100 degree heat and the ban on public gatherings and road closures set up by the police leading to Beheshteh Zahra mega cemetery, people were determined to get there. They came early, by metro, taxi, on foot, and even in wheelchairs for a 4:00 PM event. Many were turned away. The security forces, too, were present in full gear and ready to battle, prompting the gathering crowd to chant, "We are children of war, fight and we'll fight back."

While Neda's mother was barred from attending, the mother of another slain youth had this to say: "Our children died in the name of freedom. Those who killed them were cowards." People were chanting, "Neda is not dead, the government is dead," and "Referendum, Referendum, this is our demand." Then they started chanting against the "supreme leader" and for his overthrow. Basiji forces, using tear gas, batons and

even live ammunition, attacked the demonstrators, wounding and arresting many. All this is captured on video. You can see it on: (<http://www.youtube.com/user/onlymehdi#play/uploads/70/Spft7nJhT94>).

This event was to be followed by a rally at Tehran's Grand Mosalla Center. The government denied a permit for it but people came regardless. The area resembled an occupied military zone. Streets were closed, helicopters hovered overhead, and tear gas was in the air. And yet this turned out to be the most successful display of public opposition lasting late into the night, and even then, only moved to the rooftops. As one eyewitness said: "I saw a look in many people's faces that I had not seen since the week after the election; a look that said 'we can win this.'" Amidst the beatings, people were holding their ground and chanting, "Down with this hypocritical government!"

The movement is constantly evolving and adapting, both to find an open venue to protest and to thwart the security apparatus. Thus, instead of a single location, demonstrations were widespread throughout the city. They stretched the security forces thin from the cemetery, an hour's drive south to the center of the city. In a slogan, reminiscent of the 1979 Revolution, but adapted for today, people were calling for "Independence, Freedom, Iranian Republic." Moreover, protests were nationwide and held simultaneously in Shiraz, Isfahan, Mashad, Rasht, Ahwaz, Arak and other cities.

—Raha

Free Iran protest

Los Angeles—On July 25, 700 to 1,000 supporters of the two-month-long massive green wave movement in Iran gathered at UCLA in a "Global Day of Action" to "stop the disappearance, stop the torture, stop the killing" by the government. There were poets, artists, singers and speakers who urged freeing all political prisoners in the struggle for human rights. Among the supporters were women, men, youth and elderly and contingents of Amnesty International and Code Pink.

Other events in the past two months here included a July 12 demonstration at the Westwood Federal Building. Two different tendencies against Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khamenei were present. One was Iranians for the Green Movement, with signs that read, "Free all political detainees," and a long green scroll that read, "Ahmadinejad is not Iran's president," with hundreds of signatures. Supporters came and added their names.

The competing group flew an Iranian monarchic flag (red, white and green with a symbol of a lion with a sword). Their spokesperson stated that they were for the abolition of the Islamic Republic in Iran.

—Supporter

To discover how Marx restructured *Capital*, buy *Marxism and Freedom*, by Raya Dunayevskaya.

"Marx no sooner relegated the history of theory to the end of *Capital*, and began to look at the history of production relations, than he of necessity created a new dialectic instead of applying one... A new dialectic flowed out of the labor process."

See literature ad, page 7.

NEWS & LETTERS

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Raya Dunayevskaya
Chairwoman, National Editorial Board (1955-1987)

Charles Denby
Editor (1955-1983)

Olga Domanski, Franklin Dmitryev, Co-National Organizers, News and Letters Committees. **Terry Moon**, Managing Editor. **Felix Martin**, Labor Editor (1983-1999). **John Alan**, National Editorial Board Member Emeritus.

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—Kevin Michaels

Imprisoned for protesting

Editor's note: Hugh Farrell and Gina Tiga Wertz were arrested and indicted for racketeering—a charge originally intended to target the mob which carries a maximum 12-year sentence—for allegedly "conspiring" to engage in tree sits, talk to farmers, participate in non-violent civil disobedience, and for making an inflammatory blog post. They were protesting the expansion of the I-69 NAFTA superhighway. Below we print an edited article from Hugh.

Bloomington, Ind.—In the months since our arrest here on April 24, I've felt more overwhelmed by your solidarity than by the State's persecution. During some moments of isolation, times when repression is so palpable I can barely breathe, the actions of many have kept me strong and grounded. Despite the efforts of the authorities, I've remained a part of my communities.

It's these relationships and connections that are really under attack, and in an ever more coordinated way. The State has created a red herring when it claims that theatrical demonstrations or civil disobedience are the biggest obstacles to the construction of I-69. What the State really fears are many people sitting down together to begin, however awkwardly or painfully, making sense of a highway project that no lay person was ever meant to grasp.

The State fears those moments when marginalized young people like me, seemingly disillusioned with everything, break out of our isolation and begin talking with people very different from ourselves, with farmers and others, about the ways I-69 will impact our lives. It's this potential for communication that is under attack, that the police call a "racket." When they say "conspiracy," they mean our capacity to breathe together.

Being legally ensnared has cut off many of my relationships, especially those with people most socially distant from me already, primarily because so much of my time is spent dealing with legal issues. This is, of course, one of the goals of repression. Others have been subject to persecution alongside myself—Tiga, the 16 others charged with actual blockades, Chad Frazier who was sentenced to two months for I-69 resistance, and many others who are caught up in similar government harassment.

I've retained the services of lawyers and Tiga has done the same. This means that the vast bulk of money raised since we were bailed out has gone to legal expenses, a situation which will unfortunately remain for the next months or years. My bail conditions haven't been too onerous; that I require permission from the court to leave Indiana is the most challenging restriction, since it makes it that much more difficult to see people I love.

There has been nearly a complete news blackout on our case. It's important to counter this deliberate silence by calling attention to the case, especially its most embarrassing elements. This could be accomplished with more creativity than just sending out press releases. It's often forgotten that communication is itself a project. The extremes of silence and meaningless chatter are the preconditions for repression against Tiga and me and the basis for repression against entire social strata targeted for imprisonment.

There are many ways you can contribute to our defense. Raising funds will continue to be important (go to www.mostlyeverything.net). A more important dimension of solidarity is to continue deepening and extending relationships and discussions. The charges brought against Tiga and me are an attempt to spread silence and isolation. Let's avoid these at all costs.

—Hugh Farrell

Disabled fight discrimination

Washington, D.C.—Several of us from ADAPT were in the nation's capital on July 24 at a rally where President Obama was speaking. A few were within 40 feet of the podium. Because we were wearing ADAPT shirts, we were threatened with arrest if we did not leave. On the very day of the signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the President was threatening ADAPT members for speaking out for freedom and the principles of the CRPD.

Where is the freedom for people with disabilities and seniors yearning to breathe free of nursing homes and/or other institutions? Where is the freedom of speech for those people with disabilities who want liberty? If disability is not a crime, why are thousands of our people locked away, with no parole, no end to their sentences? Where are our rights?

Are we simply a crop for the nursing home and institutional providers so that they can get their dollars? Where is the justice in this picture? Obama makes it clear: dissenting voices, GO AWAY!

—ADAPT community

WORLD VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

Workers occupied the Vestas St. Cross wind turbine factory on the Isle of Wight July 20 to Aug. 7. They are calling for the plant to be nationalized under the workers' control. Vestas is the only wind turbine factory in the UK, which has thousands of such turbines in use, and plans for increasing their number.

Some speculate that the company just wants to mothball the plant until the current economic crisis picks up and a new group of workers could be found to fill the jobs of those who are fired now.

Although it's a "green" business, Vestas has hardly been friendly to its work force. One worker described it this way: "Vestas bought out NEG Micon in 2003, and since that time things just got worse as it tried to squeeze the last drop of work out of everyone, sapping them dry. Long hours in a highly stressful environment and fear of repetitive strain injuries amongst other conditions have given it a very high staff turnover. It is extremely anti-union and some workers who have joined unions have been singled out and fired on various grounds. The nearest thing to a union was a consultation network imposed by European law, where supposedly elected representatives (but in reality hand-picked by management) attended meetings where they had no input whatsoever, and were forced to relay management *diktat* to the rest of the workers."

When management announced that the factory was stopping production at the end of July, workers began to organize among themselves. Although there was no union, there were activists present from Workers' Climate Action, the Alliance for Workers Liberty, and other left groups, and workers held a public meeting and formed a committee to plan the occupation.

There has been good community support. The closure of Vestas would be a blow to the Isle of Wight economy which otherwise might have to return to tourism. Local people and fellow Vestas workers challenged police lines to bring in food to the occupiers. The Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers and the Fire Brigades Union, among others, lent support as the struggle came

UK plant occupied

to national attention.

Matt, the worker quoted above, brought out the range of issues involved here: "None of us involved in this occupation ever thought we would take part in anything like this. We quickly realized that we were at the center of a perfect storm; we had a golden opportunity to seize the factory and force the issues of green energy, massive job losses and corporate responsibility into the international spotlight. We knew we had to step up and take action, as this was bigger than all of us put together."

Although bailiffs forced an end to the occupation, the struggle continues.

Uighurs' protest

A deadly race riot in a factory in Southeast China spurred uprisings by ethnic Uighurs in their home province of Xinjiang thousands of miles away and spotlighted the long-suppressed movement for Uighur self-determination. Rumors claiming Uighur workers had raped two Chinese girls incited a mob of over a thousand ethnic Han Chinese on the night of June 25 to brutally attack Uighur workers, and beat two of them



to death, in Shaoguan at the world's largest toy factory.

When news of this atrocity reached Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, thousands of Uighurs, the Turkic people until recent times overwhelmingly dominant in the region though controlled by China's central government, began peaceful demonstrations on July 5 which targeted government facilities and shops, and cars of the ethnic Han Chinese who had poured into Urumqi and the province as a whole. In reaction, security forces and armed Han Chinese killed over 150 Uighurs, and thousands were locked up.

With so many demonstrators killed, wounded or jailed, the government invited journalists to witness the outcome, only to find demonstrations continuing. Women, with or without Muslim headscarves, frequently led them, demanding release of prisoners and access to mosques. It was appropriate that women were visible leading actual demonstrations, even as the Chinese government claimed that the long-exiled Uighur woman Rebiya Kadeer was behind every local action. It is young women who form the bulk of the migrant workforce, pushed by economics and government policy into jobs in factories like the Shaoguan toy factory where the original atrocity against Uighur workers occurred.

China has undermined Uighur culture by restricting teaching of the Uighur language in schools and by controlling Muslim religious practice. The policy of Han Chinese immigration has overwhelmed the Uighur population, leaving them strangers in their own land in large areas of Xinjiang.

—Bob McGuire

Abandoning Darfur?

It was surprising to hear recently that Amnesty International was going to cease to regard their work around Darfur, in Sudan, as one of their major campaigns. But Darfur, and violence in Sudan can't be allowed to slip from the world's consciousness.

Over 2,700 villages have been destroyed in Darfur and 250,000 people have died from attacks by government troops and *janjaweed* militias. Another two million people have become refugees. The vast majority of these people are Black African Muslims. The Sudanese government is dominated by Arab Muslims. President Omar al-Bashir has been indicted for genocide by the International Criminal Court. The violence in Darfur came after years of war against the Black Africans of southern Sudan in which over a million people died.

Recent statements of support for the Sudanese regime of Omar al-Bashir by Egyptian ruling party officials illustrate some of the dynamics of the region. The U.S.-allied Egyptian government is courting Sudan as an ally in its diplomatic battles with other countries of the Nile basin, which want to modify agreements granting Egypt use of most of the Nile's water. Because of agreements made when Britain was the colonial ruler, countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda have not been able to use the Nile waters.

There is of course opposition to the regime within Sudan itself. Sudanese Arab journalist and regime critic Lubna Hussein was arrested last month by the notorious Public Order Police for wearing trousers in a restaurant. She was taken into custody along with 14 other women, many of whom were flogged with ten lashes after admitting their "offense."

She has defied the religious judges and demanded her day in court. Hussein said: "Flogging is a terrible thing—very painful and a humiliation for the victim. But I am not afraid of being flogged. I will not back down. Now the eyes of the world are on this case I have a chance to draw attention to the plight of women in Sudan."

Zimbabwe evictions

Thousands of people in Harare, Zimbabwe, are facing mass evictions from their homes and market stalls, according to a report from Amnesty International. Many of the same people were already once evicted this way in President Mugabe's infamous "urban cleansing" campaign of 2005, which left over 700,000 without homes or means to live.

This comes at the same time as the first of two scheduled All-Stakeholders Conferences was held in Harare. These are part of the proposed process of drafting a new Constitution following power sharing agreements between Mugabe's ZANU-PF and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change whose candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, probably defeated Mugabe in the last presidential election.

The final draft Constitution is to be done by parliamentary committee. The eviction threat is a demonstration of how little has changed in some ways. The process of drafting the new Constitution is taking place over the heads of the people. This is why a number of important organizations like the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and the National Union of Students are not taking part in them.

Other organizations formed the Democratic United Front for a People-Driven Constitution, including women's groups and HIV/AIDS groups as well as 16 trade unions. Their plan is to participate critically in the process and, afterward, organize to pressure the government to respect the rights to affordable food, education, healthcare and economic justice.

Chechnya murders

Prominent Russian human rights activist Natalya Estemirova was found dead of gunshot wounds to the head and chest hours after being kidnapped by four men in a car in the Chechen capital of Grozny on July 15. She had been investigating human rights abuses, torture and disappearances by Russian government forces.

Oleg Orlov, the head of Memorial Human Rights Center, the organization Estemirova worked for, said, "A terror campaign is being conducted in Russia—terror against people who dare say things that are uncomfortable and unpleasant for the authorities, who talk about the crimes of those in power. The highest officials of Russia in recent years and today—including Putin and Medvedev—are to blame for the creation in Chechnya of a climate of permissiveness, impunity and the carrying out of massive, grave crimes by representatives of the state."

Many victims were deeply involved in exposing and opposing Russian human rights abuses in Chechnya. In the last decade Russia has become a very dangerous place for journalists, with a list of slain that may run into the dozens. The Committee for the Protection of Journalists ranks it the third most dangerous place to be a reporter, behind only Iraq and Algeria.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. *News & Letters* was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910–1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the

National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907–83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject what is, but

to reveal and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and

her final 1987 Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and donated new supplementary volumes to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

In opposing this capitalistic, racist, sexist, heterosexist, class-ridden society, we have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead." We participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our *Constitution* states: "It is our aim...to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking. Send for a copy of the *Constitution* of News and Letters Committees.

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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WORKSHOPTALKS

Job cuts guarantee needless deaths

by Htun Lin

Healthcare rationing? Death panels? We've been constantly subjected to these scary phrases from the right-wing propagandists, warning us that with President Obama's healthcare reform, government bureaucrats will pull the plug on grandma. Demagogues from that end of the political spectrum have been trying to reduce Medicare spending since its inception and refused to increase Medicaid a few years ago, even when that meant a lot of grandmas and disabled were thrown out of nursing homes in states facing budget crises.

The truth is that, long before we had heard of Obama, we already had healthcare rationing by HMOs and insurance industry death panels. We have heard horror stories about insurance industry bureaucrats whose decisions often deny lifesaving remedies. In addition, an estimated 18,000, young and old, working and unemployed, die each year from treatable ailments because they don't have access to affordable healthcare.

What has not gotten any play in the news are the further casualties and deaths from speed-up of healthcare workers. Our own unions have been allied with management's cost-control directives. They say we should be glad to have a job, we should help the company downsize, help them outsource our jobs, and that our well-being is dependent on the bottom line of the corporation.

Speed-up has caused an overall decline in the quality of healthcare in this country. That is the business-

continued on p. 3

BLACK/REDVIEW

Haiti's terrorist army

by John Alan

As John Alan is ill, we are reprinting his column from May 1992. It remains a significant description of the relations between Haiti and U.S. imperialism, now with the addition of UN troops aiding in the repression of Haiti's people.

Haiti has not been a top story in the news in recent weeks. According to Haitians living in the U.S. with contacts in Port-au-Prince, Haiti is still a fearful place to live. The army and the police continue to persecute people believed to be supporters of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. And the OAS (Organization of American States) economic embargo is a cruel farce; it does nothing to hurt the army and the wealthy, but is creating a near famine among poor Haitians.

As for the negotiations between the National Assembly and Aristide for his return to power, there is no movement. The army leaders have veto power over the negotiations and are adamant in their opposition to Aristide's army "reform" proposal.

With last September's bloody coup in mind and the continuing arrogance of the army's leadership, it's time that we take a brief look at the history of the Haitian army. Why has it been a source of political power ever since the U.S. Marines left Haiti in 1934?

First, it is obvious that the Haitian army does not exist to defend Haiti against an external military force. And second, while the army can't be separated from the existing class relations in Haiti, it remains clear that its original role as the *Garde*, i.e., the U.S.

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Afghan lives and freedom sucked into U.S. quagmire

by Terry Moon

Afghanistan: 30 years of war; a decade of drought; a fraudulent election and government rife with corruption; a murderous Taliban army growing in technical sophistication and strength; eight years of a U.S. occupying army whose purpose has always been U.S. self-interest. This is the reality that is the daily life of Afghans.

Yet those Afghan lives are the last thing considered in all the wrangling in the U.S. around the fraud-ridden election, and Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal's much anticipated assessment of the U.S. war effort there. Rather, all are concerned with the popularity—or non-popularity—of the war, not only with the U.S. electorate, but even within the Democratic Party. The main concern is damage control.

The Taliban's purposeful targeting of allied troops from Germany, Italy and Canada has strengthened internal opposition in each of those countries, scaring allied leaders, fearful only of not being reelected.

In the face of McChrystal's devastating assessment calling for at least 40,000 more U.S. troops and years of commitment to keep from losing the war, President Obama, who appears reluctant to commit more troops, said, "The first question is: Are we doing the right thing?"



Orphanage for girls in Afghanistan. When asked what they want to become, they say they want to be doctors, engineers and teachers.

Code Pink www.flickr.com/photos/codepinkale/

What does he mean by "the right thing"? The U.S. has never done "the right thing" when it comes to the people of Afghanistan. The exact opposite is the case.

The latest failure of the U.S.'s supposed initial aim in 2001 of "bringing democracy to Afghanistan" was U.S.-sponsored leader Hamid Karzai's complete disdain for the right of his own people to choose their leaders. Karzai has revealed himself as a gross opportunist who has fostered incompetence, cronyism, and extreme corruption in his own government. He has sold women's deep desire for freedom for the most paltry gains and appointed misogynists, hard-line Islamic fundamentalists, criminal warlords and drug profiteers to his cabinet.

So corrupt was the election that up to one third of the votes cast for Karzai need to be examined for fraud according to European Union election monitors, while the UN Electoral Complaints Commission ordered a recount of ballots in 10% of polling places. That 10% involves 1.35 million of the 5.66 million of the total votes cast or 24%. There were reports of "phantom polling centers"; of people showing up to vote and all the ballots being already marked and cast; of districts where every single ballot was marked for Karzai; of polling places

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Rising fascism grounded in American racism

The tens of thousands who participated in the reactionary Sept. 12 march on Washington, D.C., signaled an ominous new challenge from the far Right. The march was filled with racist attacks: pictures of President Obama as a "witch doctor" with a bone through his nose; signs telling him to "go back to Kenya," questioning his U.S. citizenship; Obama as Hitler, as Stalin, as Satan. It conjured up images of the worst in U.S. history, and attempted to negate everything that is revolutionary in that history as well.

Obama's response has been measured and pragmatic, even to denying that racism is an issue. But this open display of the most vile racism toward him was also directed at the heart of the needed American revolution. It is no accident that on Sept. 12 racist signs and slogans were side-by-side with fascist ones such as "Oust the Marxist dictator! They did it in Honduras, we can do it here!" and "We came unarmed—this time!"

THE RADICAL RIGHT'S BID FOR POWER

This rhetoric is the mark of such reactionary and neo-fascist groups as the John Birch Society, the neo-Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan and the LaRouche organization, who all participated. These forces are making a bid for control of the Republican Party—the march was addressed by a number of "mainstream" Republican politicians, like Sen. Jim DeMint (SC) and Rep. Mike Pence (IN).

The organizers of this movement are highly conscious of what they aim for—state power. To gain it they have even studied the Left, as announced on the organizers' *FreedomWorks* website: "...the Left...[has] us beat when it comes to symbolism, activism, and dominating the public debate....We have to remember that this is a March on Washington, which should conjure up images of the street protests in other countries. If we want the politicians to pay attention, we believe it is imperative that we keep our edge, tailor our message narrowly and maintain the populist imagery."

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, right-wing militias have again begun recruiting and spreading across the national landscape. A number of law enforcement officers have been shot and killed by right-wingers upset by Obama's election, and a census worker in Kentucky was recently found lynched with the word "Fed" written across his chest. The potential for much greater violence was seen in Oklahoma City

in 1995. When the idea of armed opposition to the government comes together with the historic racism embodied by the far Right, it becomes nothing less than a warrant for genocide.

DIALECTICS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

All of this reactionary rage is directed against the multi-racial support that brought Obama to the White House. As *N&L* said at the time, "It is impossible to discount the percentages of youth, women, immigrants, and Black voters who participated in the election, some for the first time in their lives. But the dimension most crucial was the number of white workers who cast their vote for a Black candidate" (Dec. 2008/Jan. 2009). The Right aims to demoralize and destroy the movement that carries this hope for a real change.

There is much that President Obama can be criticized for, including his conciliationism and pragmatism, and his continuing support for Bush's wars. But care must be taken to separate that critique from the attacks by the Right. *N&L* has challenged the anti-war movement to take a revolutionary internationalist ground, as opposed to that of reactionaries like Hitler-apologist Patrick Buchanan, or racists like Lew Rockwell and others who have courted the anti-war movement.

In the dialectics of the needed American revolution, the Black masses as vanguard come together with labor at historic turning points. Today, revolutionaries have both opportunity and responsibility to connect with the legacy of Abolitionism and of Marx's development of the philosophy of revolution in permanence. It is our responsibility to the needed American revolution, to world revolution, to human history.

This has always been the Marxist-Humanist position: "By the 1860s, the Black dimension became, at one and the same time, not only pivotal to the abolition of slavery and victory of the North in the Civil War, but also to the restructuring of [Marx's] *Capital* itself. In a word, the often-quoted sentence: 'Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black skin it is branded,' far from being rhetoric, was the actual reality and the perspective for overcoming that reality. Marx reached, at every historic turning point, for a concluding point, not as an end but as a jumping-off point, a new beginning, a new vision" (*American Civilization On Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*, Raya Dunayevskaya).

—Gerry Emmett

Childcare & Marx's vision of the future

by Beth Sandner and Urszula Wislanka

This article is based on a discussion at the Institute for Critical Study of Society in Oakland during an International Women's Day Celebration on March 8, 2009.

California's budget crisis occasioned draconian cuts in funding for education and social services, including services for children. Of the \$15.5 billion in budget cuts, K-12 schools took the biggest hit, \$6 billion; universities \$2.8 billion; medical services \$1.3 billion; plus almost another billion from in-home support services and children's health insurance programs.

The present crisis calls for revisiting Marx on many fronts, but especially what he considered the most fundamental way we reproduce our humanity: the man/woman relation and the social endeavor of raising children. For capitalism, what counts as real is only what produces value. Education and healthcare, whole areas of life, are of concern to capitalism only as an "expense," which it seeks to minimize. Since the dawn of capital-

ism, women are noticed as "contributing" only when they become a source of direct exploitation.

In the chapter on "Machinery and Large-Scale Industry" in *Capital*, Vol. I, Marx describes how capitalists intensified extraction of surplus labor within a given working day by revolutionizing production, by introducing machinery: "The labour of women and children was...the first thing sought for by capitalists who used machinery."

Women who enter the paid workforce receive lower wages. Women with children earn even less, and fields caring for children—which are largely made up of women workers—are among the lowest paid. It is symbolic of what is valued: women's work when it is entirely outside the market is unnoticed and unpaid; as it is brought into the market, it is lower-paid. Childcare workers' pay hovers at minimum wage.

Yet women with very young children are increasingly in the workforce. Before World War II, 25% of mothers with young children worked outside the home, reaching 77% in 2000. U.S. government policies on welfare by 2008 forced 75% of **single** mothers to work!

These increased numbers mean fewer adults at home to share in the care of young children or to be in the neighborhood to create a loose network of support for children. In numbers greater than ever, families are depending on paid care for their children.

EDUCATION AS EXPENSE TO BE MINIMIZED?

We see increased commodification of childcare today. Quality care for children depends on relationships. Yet maintaining profit in the childcare industry, as in any other, depends on cutting labor costs—forcing low wages. That leads to high turnover, disrupting successful relationships. Labor costs are also reduced through higher ratios of children to adults, also preventing nurturing relationships. Some of the fastest growing childcare businesses in the 1980s and 1990s were childcare chains: KinderCare, La Petite Academy and others.

Whether a value-creating activity or not, for capitalism education and care of children are only an expense to be minimized. Marx's chapter on machinery denounces the "intellectual desolation" of workers' children. Where schools were mandated, capitalists provided a semblance of education, by counting hours in a "school room" often staffed by illiterate "teachers," which substituted for actual education.

In many places Marx derides what passed for education: the classroom setting, the anointing of knowledge as a special privilege, passing through examinations, etc. As the opposite of stunting growth, he poses development of the whole human being:

"That monstrosity, the disposable working population held in reserve, in misery, for the changing requirements of capitalist exploitation, must be replaced by the individual...available for the different kinds of labor...the partially developed individual, who is the bearer of one specialized social function, must be replaced by a totally developed individual..." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 618).

How is such an individual to develop? The struggle for care and education of our children has always been the struggle of workers and has achieved most when the workers' movement is at its peak. Public education and work rules for families and children are part of the battleground of class struggle: on one side schools serve as "child care" while parents are at work, on another they are fought for as rights by and for people who never before had access to formal education.

STRUGGLES FOR EDUCATION IN THE U.S.

The first big leap in public education was during post-Civil War Reconstruction, which brought free public education to the South. The struggle for rights and access to schooling continued in 1903 when Mother Jones led a caravan of striking children from the textile mills of Lexington, Pa., to the home of President Theodore Roosevelt in New York, calling for an end to child labor and the provision of schools. Still, industrialists who opposed child labor reform laws viewed it as "foolish to give certain classes of children an education and an opportunity to develop, because they are designed by God and nature to be of a lower order" (Felix Adler, "Child Labor in the United States and Its Great Attendant Evils," *Annals of the American Academy*, 25:554).

Organized workers and African Americans, through continued demands for access, brought federal funding into early childhood care during the Depression and Civil Rights Movement. Federal funding was provided for early childhood care in World War II to allow the increase of women in the workforce. Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954 reflected the struggle, with the victorious ruling stating, "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," but without any promise for equal funding. The 1960s War on Poverty initiated Head Start, until the Obama administration the only time since WWII that funds have been dedicated to young children. Many victories have been won in the form of concessions from the state, which mediates social conflicts in order to preserve capitalism.

Ideological babies

Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement, by Kathryn Joyce (Beacon Press, 2009).

Kathryn Joyce has written a book about how the religious right is largely based upon a movement to restore patriarchy and how this is harmful to women and society. Meaning "rule of the fathers," patriarchy is a society where women are submissive to men, and fathers are in complete control of their families.

Joyce investigates the patriarchy movement's extreme manifestation, "Quiverfull," where women postpone sex until marriage, after which they have as many children as possible. Quiverfull children are meant to be an "army of God" (a Biblical reference comparing a father's children to his quiver full of arrows) that will "reclaim" the culture of the U.S. and the world for the religious right. The children are homeschooled, taught creationism and taught that the founders of the U.S. intended it to be a fundamentalist Christian country.

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL EDUCATION

Boys are sent to religious right colleges to be trained as leaders—the "heroes" who will change society. Girls, who are not allowed to attend college, are trained in housekeeping and childcare and taught they are the property of their fathers until they become the property of their husbands. It is drilled into girls that submission to men is for their own good because they are more easily deceived, more deceitful, and more sinful than men. Wives are trained to police their negative thoughts towards their husbands, and taught that if husbands abuse them it is the wife's fault.

Some matches are arranged to join prominent families. But even a man who is not successful in the outside world can have a position of respect as the "lord" and "patriarch" of his home in a Quiverfull community, even though these large families end up in poverty. Although Quiverfull is extreme, all of its positions have filtered into mainstream conservative Christianity.

The main goal of the patriarchy movement is destroying feminism. The movement is especially critical of liberal churches that have accepted an "egalitarian" feminism that allows women to have careers, contraception, and equal relationships with men. It says that these will lead to a "radical" feminism that approves of abortion and gay rights and that will lead to "social anarchy" caused by "individual rights."

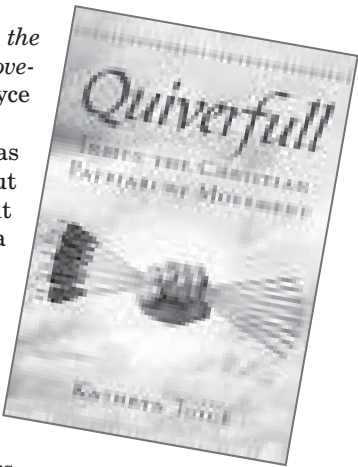
Joyce describes how the movement has established gynecologists and pharmacists who refuse to write or fill prescriptions for contraceptives. She describes movement activists who want to outlaw women's suffrage, no-fault divorce, day care centers, Head Start, stem-cell research and in-vitro fertilization, and end laws that punish child abuse. They want to replace pensions for individuals with those for male heads of households and return to sex-segregated job listings. She describes how such activists have already been appointed to positions in the U.S. government. For example, Dr. David Hagar was appointed by the Bush administration to the FDA to oppose contraception and abortion.

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF OPPRESSION

The patriarchy movement arose within mainstream churches and spread to other denominations and congregations, sometimes taking them over as it did with the Southern Baptist Convention. This movement has infiltrated the UN and established a bloc of antiabortion nations. Religious right groups have joined with Mormon leaders and the Vatican to establish the World Congress of Families (WCF) to fight women's and gay rights internationally. The WCF also works with Muslim groups, although they use the fear of an Islamic takeover of Europe to influence Europeans to have large families. They promote the racist notion of a "demographic winter" which claims white Europeans are dying out to be replaced by "foreigners" if they don't start reproducing more quickly.

Patriarchal oppression of women occurs internationally in fundamentalist Jewish and Muslim societies without the influence of the Christian religious right. Joyce interviews a doctor at an Israeli women's clinic whose clients are Jewish ultra-Orthodox. They are under the same pressure as Quiverfull women and suffer medical problems and even death from the constant pregnancies as well as constant labor in the home. The doctor describes these women as becoming "de-selfed" to the point where they can't say that they want to stop having babies.

Joyce doesn't propose answers about how to stop the patriarchy movement. However, this is a very important book that needs a wider distribution because it exposes the extremes to which the religious right will go to take over society and explains the harmfulness of patriarchy to women and society.



Crystal Lee Sutton



The desperate need for healthcare reform became even more a reality on Sept. 11, when we lost one of our own. Crystal Lee Sutton died of brain cancer at 68 because her insurance company refused to cover treatment for her illness.

The inspiration for the 1979 movie *Norma Rae*, Sutton called her case and thousands like it "an example of abuse of the working poor...how can it take so long for them to decide when it could be a matter of life and death? It is almost like, in a way, committing murder." By the time the insurance company decided to cover her medication, it was too late. She died two months later.

—MJG

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Women in Uganda celebrated a victory in August after intense public protests led to the re-arrest of the police commander, James Peter Aurien, for the self-confessed murder of his wife. Domestic violence is a daily occurrence in Uganda, with 78% of women experiencing some form of abuse. In 2008 over 70 women were killed by their spouses, with the number on the rise.

—Information from *Inter Press Service News Agency*

Women's and human rights organizations in Mexico are fighting the confirmation of Arturo Chávez Chávez as the country's new attorney general, accusing him of covering up the mass murders of women and the disappearances of men in Ciudad Juárez in the late 1990s. Mothers of femicide victims organized a public protest in Chihuahua City, with Women in Black and other groups staging similar demonstrations.

—Information from *Mexidata.Info*

Women have been the target of violence for nearly two decades in Haiti, despite five years of UN peacekeepers. Kidnapping, criminal violence, gang warfare and armed confrontation have increased the number of reported cases of sexual violence against women and girls. Last year the number of rapes increased 40% from 1,100 to 1,600. Nicole Magloire, of Haitian Violence Against Women, feels these numbers are due to women feeling safer reporting the crimes.

More than 200 women and men from 17 states traveled to Nebraska at the end of August in support of Dr. Larry Carhart, one of the few physicians in the U.S. to provide late-term abortions. Federal marshals stopped protecting his clinic despite the right wing's murder of Dr. George Tiller in May, and a new campaign targeting Carhart by Operation Rescue. Pro-choice demonstrators outnumbered anti-choicers 3-to-1.

—Information from *Feminist News*

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—Adele

SK Hand Tools strike over healthcare

Chicago—I work for SK Hand Tools, employed by this company almost 23 years. We're on strike now over unfair labor practices. Our employer unilaterally and without notice took our insurance away as of May 1. Maybe three weeks later, we started finding out we were no longer covered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield, when people started going to the doctor or filling their prescriptions.

Instead of paying the co-payment, they were asked to pay the full amount. One guy had to have emergency surgery for a hernia, and it cost around \$20,000, so he still owes a big portion of that. There's a guy that, maybe a year and a half ago, had a kidney transplant. He needs dialysis. Once you have surgery, especially a kidney transplant, you have to have continuous care like dialysis and medications.

We're out here 24/7. We're learning as we go—99% of us here have never been involved in a strike before. It's amazing how much support we are getting. There is also a great unity between all of us—we are Mexican, Polish, Vietnamese, everything. It's like a little UN and everybody gets along. We feel very close. Everybody brings food some days; we take turns.

We are with Teamsters Local 743, and we've gotten a lot of support from other locals. Gov. Quinn was here and gave us a lot of support. A few weeks ago Dan Hynes (the Illinois Comptroller running against Gov. Quinn) was here. We've had so much support. Jobs with Justice is here, and so many locals I can't even name them all. A lot of restaurants have come and donated food. We need a lot of support, a lot of people to come up here and strike with us.

WORKSHOPTALKS

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as-usual "death panel" already practiced by HMOs and nursing home chains. Preventable death and injuries from accidents arise from HMO cost-cutting measures and divestments, resulting in hospital bed eliminations, reductions in clinic services and ER closures.

Kaiser HMO's immediate reaction to impending healthcare reform was to announce more layoffs, including nearly one third of Oakland's housekeepers. Nearly all housekeepers told me they had no faith that SEIU will really fight these layoffs.

As one Black housekeeper put it, "They say they want to improve performance and reduce the time it takes to get rooms ready. But tell me how they're going to do this by laying one third of us off? You know what's going to happen? They're going to make the rest of us work three times faster."

Cost-control ideologues fail to view the whole healthcare issue as one of safety, not just finance. Every day yet another safety measure is eliminated in the hospital. Built-in redundancies were originally created to prevent accidents, much in the same way airlines use redundancies in their planes to prevent accidents.

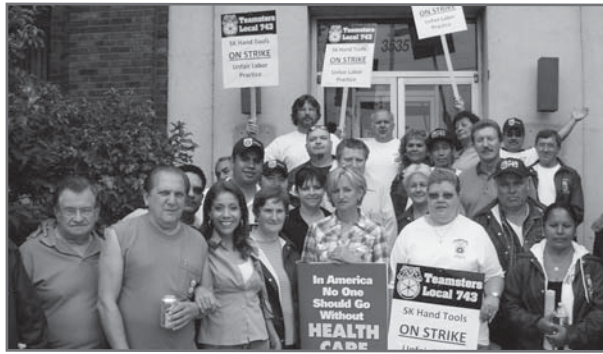
For HMO managers, it's all about emulating manufacturing's "just-in-time" delivery, as if healthcare were just another product like shoes and tires. Our former CEO, Dr. David Lawrence, once said, in a moment of candor, "If [the HMO industry] were in the airline business, we would have been shut down a long time ago."

Every day our nursing supervisors are ordered by budget directors to send nursing staff home in the middle of their shifts if the patient total goes down. Nurses are called back to work "just in time" only in the last hour, and only if the patient census goes up. They make sure there is no buffer for the emergency situations that arise. Nurses are constantly overworked and missing their lunches and breaks. With labor costs under such tight controls, the HMO has reported handsome quarterly profits. These profits didn't stop our HMO from announcing a new round of layoffs.

Safety and prevention are the essence of healthcare in rebuilding the health infrastructure. Dealing with the imminent threat of catastrophic epidemics, like SARS and antibiotic-resistant TB, require treatment for all humans, immigrant or not, because such illnesses know no nationality.

For a moment President Obama, in his speech to Congress, turned the question of healthcare away from the tug of war over costs, which healthcare workers experience every day. Obama cited a letter from Sen. Edward M. Kennedy to be read after his death. He wrote that healthcare was "above all a moral issue; at stake are not just the details of policy, but fundamental principles of social justice and the character of our country."

From the point of view of those who are struggling to provide quality care, speaking about healthcare as a moral issue, something we "ought" to do, is inadequate. It is about reclaiming the very meaning of our labor. Must our labor be only a means to life under the regimen of capitalism, or can it be directly about enhancing the well-being of ourselves and others?



Strikers from Teamsters Local 743 picket SK Hand Tools after the company unilaterally canceled their health insurance.

We might be having a rally soon in front of Sears because we manufacture Craftsman tools for Sears. We manufacture tools, hand tools. Most of the people are setup and operators. We set up and operate our own machinery. I work on the stamp machine, putting the part number on all the parts.

These machines are very difficult to run. We always say that we have to hold them together with rubber bands and band-aids because that's how old they are. We know how to set them up because we've been working on them for so many years. We have to put little shims in.

Scabs are working in there now. If they make a ratchet wrong, if it's not assembled properly, somebody could get hurt. I know of six scabs who came in there yesterday. I heard today they're interviewing for jobs. We're hoping that it will be very difficult for them to set up.

We used to have a crew that cleaned the offices and bathrooms. They got rid of the cleaning people. We used to have security. They don't have any more security. They say, If you want a clean bathroom you clean your own.

We're in the middle of negotiations. The reason we're out here is unfair labor practices. SK also has a plant in McCook, Ill. Between that plant and here on 47th we have 70 or 75 workers. The boss is asking for \$4 an hour from us for six months to help them move McCook over here. I moved a couple of years ago from one apartment to another and I didn't ask him for any help.

On top of that, he wants 20% of our wages. A lot of us have four weeks vacation because we've been here so long. He wants to cut that down so everybody gets two weeks. This guy wants an arm and a leg and then some. Anytime he wants to he can fly back and have free healthcare—he's French.

We're not going to give up. Everybody is supporting us. And we support them too. Everybody needs healthcare. Not just the people here at SK. I want to ask people, if it happened to you, what would you do? Everybody needs to stand up for their rights and not just say, I have no choice, because I need my job. Stand up for your rights. Demand what you're entitled to.

—Woman worker

March on Wall Street

Bronx, N.Y.—After the Wall Street firm Brynwood Partners bought Stella d'Oro Bakery Co. in the Bronx, it tried to break the union by insisting on a contract that would have cut wages by 25% and destroyed many benefits. This provoked an 11-month strike by Local 50 of the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) in August 2008.

Brynwood hired scabs, and the union appealed to the NLRB. Activist groups and Stella d'Oro workers formed the Stella Workers Solidarity Committee (www.stelladorostrike.com). The NLRB finally ruled for the Union, directing Brynwood to take the workers back and negotiate in good faith.

Brynwood then announced it would sell Stella d'Oro to the anti-union company Lance, Inc. Lance plans to close the plant, which has been in the Bronx for 70 years, and move production to its non-union plant in Ohio, putting unionized workers here out on the street.

The Solidarity Committee organized a rally and march on Sept. 25 at the headquarters in Manhattan of Goldman Sachs, a major stockholder in Lance. The new AFL-CIO President, Richard Trumka, was at a forum in New York City on Sept. 21 and recognized the Stella d'Oro workers, but he neglected to announce the rally scheduled for Sept. 25.

Union leaderships have given money and published articles in their newspapers but they have failed to mobilize their thousands of members to participate in rallies and boycotts. The finance capital elite which controls both parties is being bailed out while the working class bears the brunt of capitalism's economic crisis.

Companies are downsizing and workers are losing their jobs and their homes, yet their union leaders, who are mostly wedded to the corporatist Democratic party, have been incapable or unwilling to mobilize their rank and file to fight back. As owners of factories, such as the Stella d'Oro company, seek ways to maximize profits by downsizing or moving to cheaper labor areas, only a united and massive response by unions will be able to resist these attacks on workers.

—Tom Siracuse

Hyatt workers sit in

Chicago—Hundreds of hotel and restaurant workers and their supporters demonstrated in front of the Park Hyatt Hotel near the historic Water Tower on Sept. 24. The demonstration was organized by Local 1 of UNITE HERE in support of 6,000 hotel workers negotiating a new contract in Chicago, and in support of the 100 Hyatt housekeeping workers in Boston who were recently fired.

Up to 200 people were arrested when they sat down to block the street as an act of civil disobedience. They were peaceful but determined. Most participants wore red shirts that said, "We are not afraid!" on one side and, on the other, had the name of one of the large hotels that were represented—the Drake, Hilton, Congress and Sheraton among them.

The hotel industry has been cutting staff, forcing more overtime and speed-up from remaining workers, and avoiding benefit payments. Healthcare benefits are a major issue. One Latina worker said, "It is a good idea to be out here today. It's our benefits. They want to cut out coverage of our health insurance." Another Latino worker said, "They would like to give us a five-year contract with a 1% raise. They're playing dirty. They're making all this money from us, but we don't see it."

Earlier, a delegation led by Angela Norena, one of the fired housekeepers from Boston, had appealed to Penny Pritzker—of the billionaire Chicago Pritzker family and a Hyatt Hotel director—to reinstate the fired Boston workers. Pritzker refused to answer them.

The very diverse crowd of Black, Latino, Asian and white workers and supporters at the demonstration chanted "Si se puede! Yes we can!" Spirits were high. You could read the determination in the faces of everybody there. In the words of one Black woman worker, "It was a fantastic display of the power of people when they come together."

—Gerry Emmett

AFL-CIO in the crisis

Detroit—Nothing close to suspense occurred during the AFL-CIO Convention Sept. 14-17 in Pittsburgh, even though the labor federation of 57 unions with 11.5 million members elected new leaders, including President Rich Trumka, Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler, and Executive Vice-President Arlene Holt Baker. Trumka, former president of the United Mine Workers union before being tapped by outgoing President John Sweeney in 1995 to be his running mate to lead the AFL-CIO, had served as secretary-treasurer for 14 years.

JOB LOSSES

The AFL-CIO executives lamented the huge loss of membership resulting from automation, outsourcing of jobs to other countries and to low-pay areas in the U.S., the economic collapse, the ceaseless attacks on unions by corporations and the anti-labor policies and practices of the Bush administration.

They emphasized the need for new organizing programs. Trumka declared that a force of 1,000 professional union organizers would be sent next year to organize the unorganized, with special focus on young, low-paid and minority workers, including immigrants. Pablo Alvarado, representing 41 work centers that make up the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, pointed out that every day there are 120,000 day laborers exploited and underpaid by their employers.

INVISIBLE WORKING CLASS

It is interesting that the only speaker to use the expression "working class" was labor secretary Hilda Solis. The others referred to workers as "middle class." A further indication of this is the effort now underway in the AFL-CIO to find another word for workers. Too many people, they say, don't consider themselves workers. Are all the workers in the mills, mines and factories now going to be associates, like at Wal-Mart?

President Obama, like the other speakers, favored the card check provision that has been stripped from the Employee Free Choice Act, but did not forcefully refer to the need to support it. Card check would force employers to recognize a union if a majority of the workers signed a card in favor of a union. Losing it represents a dramatic defeat for the unions that had made card check the centerpiece of their legislative goals.

Almost all the resolutions could be supported by anyone. But then there were resolutions calling for the repeal of Saddam Hussein's anti-labor laws in Iraq; support for ending the Cuban embargo; and support for the return of Honduran President Manuel Zelaya.

Instead of pointing to the need to replace the present economic system that has created economic meltdown and is sending unemployment to record levels, the leadership of the AFL-CIO continues to speak in terms supporting existing "free markets." This comes as no surprise. After all, the AFL-CIO is a labor bureaucracy that long ago demonstrated its capitulation to and cooperation with corporate leaders in opposition to the aspirations of the working class in America.

—Andy Phillips

FROM THE WRITINGS OF
RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

*Editor's note: November marks 20 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, which crystallized the collapse of state-capitalism calling itself Communism in all of East Europe. As the East European revolts and the work of socialist humanist dissidents were both crucial for the development of Marxist-Humanism, we present brief excerpts from a lecture Raya Dunayevskaya gave on her books **Marxism and Freedom, Philosophy and Revolution, and Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** in relationship to the rise of Solidarity followed by martial law in Poland, 1980-82. Presented by the author on Feb. 14, 1982, the lecture was titled: 'From Revolution to Revolution to Revolution—in Actuality, in Thought, in Vision.'*

It may sound stratospheric to give a talk called "From Revolution to Revolution to Revolution," when we are witnessing a counter-revolution as brutal as that against the Polish people by their own state-capitalist rulers, propped up by Russia, and, on our own continent, the genocide against the Salvadoran people by a junta Reagan is not only propping up but training in that genocide. Nevertheless, it is not stratospheric. The truth is that we cannot forget that, for 18 long months, the Polish workers, women and youth have been creating a union that is not just a union, but combines economics, politics and ideology. Nor can we forget that, before Poland, there was the Iranian Revolution. Between them, they opened so many new doors to the transformation of reality that they have given us a different vision of the future.

Let us take one single district—Silesia—one of the most active not only in 1980, but in 1970. It was there that many lives were taken when the counter-revolution opened its attack on Dec. 13 [1981]. But you cannot kill the idea of freedom; you can only drive it underground when a revolution is that deep. And it is precisely that depth, and that concreteness, that both allows us to see a bit of the future, and makes it necessary to turn back 137 years [to 1844], to that same district of Silesia when it was not the miners but the weavers who were in revolt. Because Marx had discovered a whole new continent of thought and of revolution, and named his philosophy a "new Humanism," he was able to see in that weavers' revolt a new stage of revolution that challenged private capitalism.

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PHILOSOPHY BECOMES CONCRETE for each age in a new way. I had begun to study the nature of the Russian economy as state-capitalism when the world was suddenly confronted with the Hitler-Stalin Pact. By the time of Stalin's death in 1953, the study became not just an analysis of the monstrosity Russia had become but a search for a philosophy of liberation as well as for the struggles that would be fighting against totalitarian state-capitalism. When the 1953 East German revolt brought Marx's 1844 Humanist Essays onto the historic stage with its slogan "Bread and Freedom," it illuminated the struggle against Communist totalitarianism as a struggle against both economic exploitation and political tyranny. Theoretically, too, Marx's new Humanism had to be made concrete for our age. That search, for me, began several weeks before the East German uprising, with the letters on Hegel's Absolute Idea I wrote in 1953.

Their pivotal point was the concept that the Absolute Idea meant not only a new **unity** of theory and practice, but a movement from practice to theory. It was this breakthrough on the Absolute Idea that presented the challenge for a new relationship of theory to practice and provided the vantage point for the emergence of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. in two ways:

1) By no means had it first appeared in our age. It had always characterized that relationship of objective to subjective. Specifically, our analysis of the immediate situation became the form for viewing all historic struggles from 1776 to our day and determined the structure of **Marxism and Freedom**.

2) My translation of Marx's Humanist Essays became the first to be published in English when they were included as an Appendix to **Marxism and Freedom**.

* * *

WHAT BECAME MOST exciting in 1979, when the Iranian revolution erupted, was that some of the young revolutionaries not only began to translate into Farsi Marx's Humanist Essays as they found them presented in **Marxism and Freedom**, but decided to translate also the book's chapter on "Worker and Intellectual at a Turning Point in History: 1848-1861." They didn't need help in being opposed to Khomeini, but they felt they would not be able to win if their opposition was only activity and not philosophy.

1848 had become a crucial point of reference also for those who participated in the 1905-07 Russian-Polish Revolution. It is this which I deal with in my lat-

East European revolt and the re-creation of Marx's Marxism

est book on **Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution**. Luxemburg saw, through her experiences in that revolution, that it wasn't the leadership of the German Social-Democracy but the masses in motion who transformed her little Polish party of "seven and a half" people into a mass organization of 30,000 overnight. She also saw new forms of revolt: the General Mass Strike of trade unions whose demands were not only economic, but completely political.

In 1907, when the Russian revolutionaries held a Congress in London, it was not only the events of 1905 but their relationship to 1848 that was up for discussion. It was Luxemburg who said: Yes, 1848 was very great, but something was new in 1905. It was not only that politics and economics had been united in the General Mass Strike. **It was that 1905 was not the last of the 19th century, but the first of the 20th century revolutions**—with many more to follow.

* * *

THE 1960s PRESENTED US with a similar problem: How are the new rebellions of our day—of the youth, Blacks, women, the Third World—related to the Marxism of Marx? As we listened to the new voices from below, we felt a compulsion to "translate" Marx's Marxism for our age. It was the period, also, of the sudden appearance of the Sino-Soviet conflict and of our raising the question: Could there be war between two state-capitalist societies calling themselves Communist?

Just as a new chapter on that Sino-Soviet conflict was added to a new edition of **Marxism and Freedom**—and was preceded by the pamphlet, **Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions**—so **News & Letters** published **American Civilization on Trial**, an analysis of American history from its earliest days. There we contrasted the triangular trade of slaves, between Africa, the West Indies and the U.S., to the triangular exchange of the ideas of freedom. At the same time, **News & Letters** published a whole host of new pamphlets—from **Workers Battle Automation to Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves** and **The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution**—where the new voices of the youth, workers, Black revolutionaries in the U.S. as well as in Africa, could be heard.

In a way, all these pamphlets could be considered a "second book" on Marxist-Humanism in the context of an actually developing new revolution from below.

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ONE HISTORIC FACET keeps us returning to the question of Poland. In Marx's day it was the 1863 rebellion which became ground for establishing the First International Workingmen's Association in 1864. When that period came to a climax with the 1871 Paris Commune, Marx did more than just refer to the Poles as the greatest fighters of the Commune. He found further illumination for his **Capital** in the chapter on the fetishism of commodities, even as the Civil War and the struggle for the eight-hour day had led him to re-structure his greatest work.

In our day, it is again the Polish struggle for freedom that so integrates the objective and subjective needs that it eliminates the division between theory and practice. I am especially proud of the chapter on East Europe in **Philosophy and Revolution**, which begins with a description of Poland, December 1970, that reads as if it were describing 1980, including even the city, Gdansk. The reason it can sound so current is because so many East European dissidents helped me

to write that chapter. But that is not the point now. The point today is what to do now that the counter-revolution has moved to crush that revolution.

It is easy to express our solidarity with Solidarity in the form of demonstrations or sending food. What is not as easy is to grapple with the also-needed critique. What did it mean for Jacek Kuron to think that, if they had a "self-limiting revolution," then maybe they could win? The counter-revolution will not stay its hand just because you say you don't really mean an all-out revolution. They know that, once unleashed, the masses in motion will move to full freedom. What must be ended is the separation of theory from practice.

It is such concrete life-and-death struggles as these that make it necessary for us to dig into what Hegel meant by "second negativity" and what Marx meant by "revolution in permanence." It is precisely that which is the thesis of the new book.

* * *

WE MUST SKIP a good deal of the new book, both as it concerns Rosa Luxemburg and today's Women's Liberation Movement and concentrate, instead, now that we have all of Marx's major works, on what is not only new but especially unique in Part Three of the work: "Karl Marx—from Critic of Hegel to Author of **Capital** and Theorist of 'Revolution in Permanence.'"

We will see there, for the first time, that two years before Marx broke with bourgeois society, he had, in his doctoral thesis of 1841, already begun the search for where to begin anew when you break with Hegel's idealism and want to create an entirely new unity of idealism and materialism as you turn to the real world and the workers' actual battles.

We will also see there, in Marx's study [in his **Ethnological Notebooks**] of **Ancient Society** [by Lewis Henry Morgan], not only a fourth form of society, the Asiatic Mode of Production; not only a discovery of Primitive Communism; and not only a new view of Women's Liberation; but so sharp a distinction from his closest collaborator, Engels, as to re-evaluate the whole question of post-Marx Marxism. And for the first time, we will return from Marx to Hegel—on, however, Marx's new ground of the movement from below as well as the self-determination of the Idea for one's own age—and see how this means taking on the responsibility for the task of our age: the transformation of reality. Permit me, therefore, to quote my conclusion:

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"It isn't because we are any 'smarter' that we can see so much more than other post-Marx Marxists. Rather, it is because of the maturity of our age....Only live human beings can re-create the revolutionary dialectic forever anew. And these live human beings must do so in theory as well as in practice. It is not a question only of meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the Idea, and of deepening theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of 'revolution in permanence.'

"What is needed is a new unifying principle, on Marx's ground of humanism, that truly alters both human thought and human experience. Marx's **Ethnological Notebooks** are a historic happening that proves, 100 years after he wrote them, that Marx's legacy is no mere heirloom, but a live body of ideas and perspectives that is in need of concretization. Every moment of Marx's development, as well as the totality of his works, spells out the need for 'revolution in permanence.' This is the absolute challenge to our age."

East European revolt as seen in the Trilogy of Revolution

Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today

The myth that the Russian totalitarian State is invincible was suddenly and strikingly shattered. On June 17, 1953, the workers in the East German satellite took matters into their own hands on the questions of speed-up....*For four hours, the only power in East Berlin belonged to the workers...* The East Germans...answered, in an unmistakable affirmative, *Can man achieve freedom out of the totalitarianism of our age?*

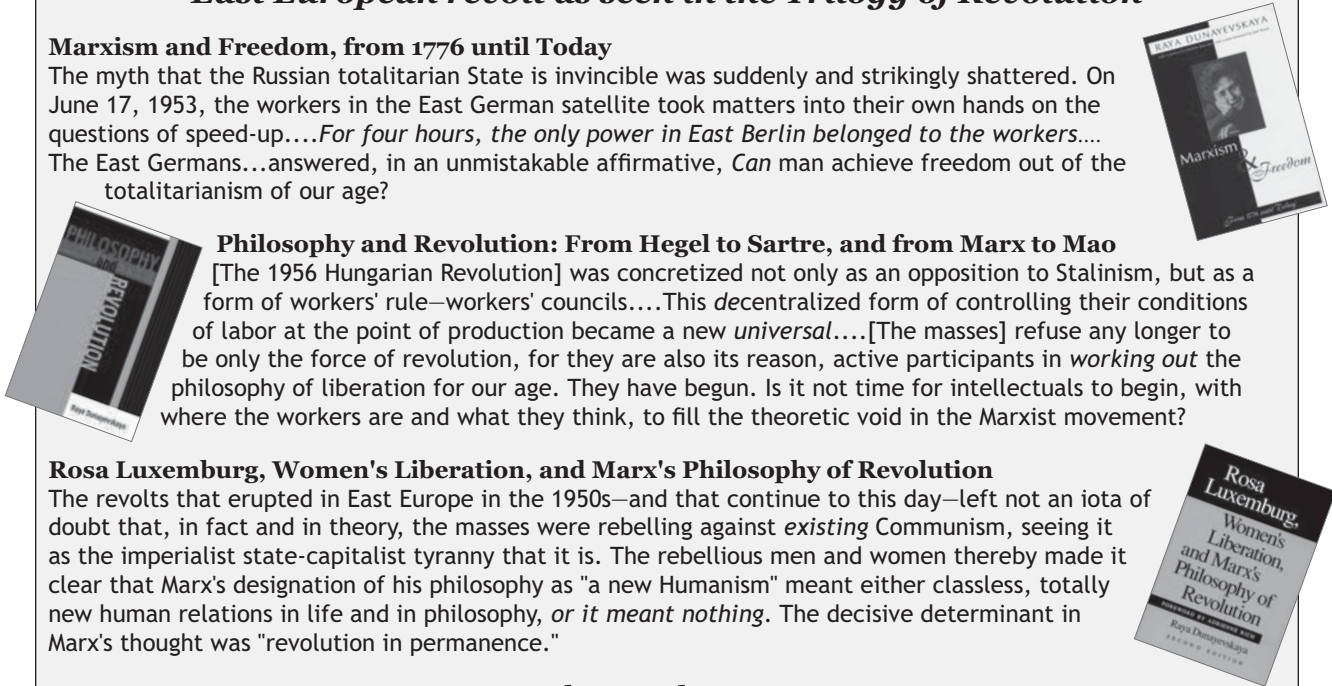
Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre, and from Marx to Mao

[The 1956 Hungarian Revolution] was concretized not only as an opposition to Stalinism, but as a form of workers' rule—workers' councils....This *decentralized* form of controlling their conditions of labor at the point of production became a new *universal*....[The masses] refuse any longer to be only the force of revolution, for they are also its reason, active participants in *working out* the philosophy of liberation for our age. They have begun. Is it not time for intellectuals to begin, with where the workers are and what they think, to fill the theoretic void in the Marxist movement?

Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution

The revolts that erupted in East Europe in the 1950s—and that continue to this day—left not an iota of doubt that, in fact and in theory, the masses were rebelling against *existing* Communism, seeing it as the imperialist state-capitalist tyranny that it is. The rebellious men and women thereby made it clear that Marx's designation of his philosophy as "a new Humanism" meant either classless, totally new human relations in life and in philosophy, *or it meant nothing*. The decisive determinant in Marx's thought was "revolution in permanence."

To order, see ad, p. 7.



Eyewitness report on Honduras resistance

Editor's note: These reports, translated from Spanish by Brown Douglas, were sent to N&L by Francesca Gargallo, a Latin American writer and feminist. The first dispatch is an eyewitness report she wrote while in Honduras with the Feminist Writers Network.

Tegucigalpa, Honduras—"When the media is silent, the walls inform the people" was the message written all over the streets of Tegucigalpa, a city in its 84th day of resistance to the coup d'état. The Resistance movement has become not only a path towards the masses' dignity, but the most participatory reclaiming of democracy on the American continent. It's a movement that posits a new relation between the political and the private with its slogan: "Against the coup d'état, against the coup on women."

Before June 28 nobody would have thought that 10% of the Honduran population would self-organize peacefully in the streets against a takeover. On that day President Zelaya was taken from his house in his underwear by soldiers brandishing a Congressional order. He was placed on a plane and whisked off to Costa Rica. This liberal president was just beginning to come around to the people's demands to redistribute wealth, and for agrarian reform, political reform and social justice. His "sins" were having raised the minimum wage, signing on with ALBA [Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, an organization led by Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez promoting welfare-state policies and trade in Latin America—translator], and proposing an official inquiry into whether the Honduran people wanted to vote for constitutional reform in the November 2009 elections.

Since morning broke on June 28, people of all stripes and organizations have grouped before the presidential palace: peasants, street vendors, labor unionists, a considerable number of feminist women, teachers and indigenous people. Right then and there they founded the Bloc in Resistance to the Coup.

Meanwhile, the head of Congress declared himself the President of the Republic. This political hijacking was driven by the most conservative sectors of society: rich media magnates, sweatshop owners, huge ranch estates and the fast food industry. This set afoot daily demonstrations against the State in Crisis.

The direct mass participation in organized resis-

tance has engendered a reflection on important questions such as what kind of democracy is necessary for Honduras, how to unmask the violence—both at work and in the home—against women, the killings of movement leaders, and what exactly to demand of the State. Finally, we took up the question of what to propose in a Constitutional Assembly. These dialogues were all organized during marches, pickets and demonstrations. **They demonstrate the masses' preparation for the fight to improve their conditions, as well as the ability to take advantage of the space opened up by Zelaya in the six months prior to the coup.**

Today the Honduran people are resisting the state's kidnapping by a minority of the population, the oligarchy. That's why, Monday through Friday, we've marched on the street now known as the Boulevard of the Resistance. We enter marginalized neighborhoods where gangs, drug dealers, and pimps have robbed the people of the use of public space.

Coming from all the regions of Honduras—from the sweatshops in San Pedro Sula, to the agrarian area of Olancho, to the Atlantic coast with populations of Garifunas and African descendants, to the forest regions with indigenous populations—countless marches have converged on Tegucigalpa over the last two and a half months. The diversity of participation includes the COPINH (Civil Counsel of Indigenous and People's Organizations of Honduras) and the OFRANEH (Fraternal Organization of Black Hondurans), and even clergy.

But two or more people in the Resistance movement are murdered every week. Like in the rest of Latin America, women are murdered in such a way that the violence against their bodies sends a dual message of fear and intimidation to the whole population.

On Sept. 15, Independence Day for Central America, more than 600,000 people (10% of the population) came

out on the streets of every city of the country to oppose the coup. The military, on the other hand, had its own march that succeeded in gathering no more than 30,000 at most. The military march was too scared by the multitude of people declaring a "Second Independence Day" to come very far into the city.

It's worth asking, "What future does the Resistance point to?" It is obvious that the coup will not be able to govern. They haven't only been shunned by the international community (only Israel and Taiwan recognize the Micheletti government); the whole of Honduras repudiates them. The farmers have taken over the National Agrarian Institute and won't let the coup-appointed government ministers take their positions. The sweatshop workers have increased their demands for dignity, health, and good pay in the workplace (the placard that one sees in the marches reads "Work, yes. But with dignity!"). Regional commerce has collapsed.

The coup-makers seek to keep themselves in power in November elections. They hope to take advantage of their control of the media to propose two candidates, the nationalist Porfirio Lobo Sosa

and the liberal Elvin Santos. In spite of all of this, the Liberal Party is divided, with one part supporting the demand for the immediate return of Manuel Zelaya. The Democratic Unification, a small Left Party that has opposed the coup in Congress, insists that the elections will only be fair after the return of Zelaya. **For its part, the Resistance has already demanded a Constitutional Assembly ("Elections, no! Constitutional Assembly, yes!") is another popular slogan adorning the walls of Tegucigalpa).**

Feminists, teachers, and unionists are starting to unite, while the farmers and peasants have organized themselves into three Confederations and 24 collectives and have proposals for comprehensive agrarian reform. Nonetheless, it's not clear what will draw these causes together. For instance, in a religious country like Honduras, how will the interests of farmers and Christian workers' unions jibe with the demands of women for a free and voluntary motherhood? Without women, no democracy is valid. And that is more than just a slogan written on a wall.

—September 19, 2009



Garifunas perform during a mass march against the coup

ESSAY

Childcare & Marx's vision of future

continued from p. 2

Capitalism, however, dismantles workers' gains on the basis of changing needs of producing value. Today's reality proves that we need to abolish capitalism and its state in order to achieve a society in which individuals can fully develop.

Recently, a grassroots group of early childhood teachers and providers in California raised three demands: 1) Increased pay and benefits. Childcare will not be a decent place for children if this work is not valued. 2) More opportunities for professional development and coursework that meets their needs. Working people are ongoing learners who want opportunity to enhance their knowledge. 3) Early childhood teachers must be included at the table when decisions are being made, and they are fighting to have a say over their work. They are fighting against being totally alienated from their labor.

EDUCATION IN THE FUTURE?

Marx had a distinctive perspective on the future of education. When labor is no longer alienated, education will be integral to life from start to finish as part of the development of the whole human being. Or as Marx put it in the chapter on machinery: "... the education of the future...will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labor with instruction and gymnastics...as the only method of producing fully developed human beings" (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 614).

Understanding and promoting the importance of care for children is part of the struggle to hold on to our humanity. At stake is what is fundamental and human in the parent/child relationship. Marx said the relation between man and woman "reveals the extent to which man's natural behavior has become human...the extent to which he in his individual existence is at the same time a social being." We read this to mean that what is specifically human is not the biological imperative of creating the next generation but what we make of that material necessity through our explicitly social relations. Traditional women's work, caring for each other, our elderly and our children—these ideas and possibilities are caught up in the work and thought of childcare workers as they struggle to keep that work human. They address the question **now** of what **is** human labor.

When commodification takes over the way childcare is socialized, it risks de-personalizing deep personal relationships. At the same time it holds the promise of making the problem more visible, putting into the public sphere the importance of the care and socializa-

tion of our children. Now some of this takes the form of the educational adequacy movements that can drag you into the muck of proving through testing, standards, and credentials, that what you are doing "works." Early childhood teachers have fought to keep social and emotional development included in the standards, and to limit reliance on testing; they push for curricula that teachers have control over and for funding to improve the lives and work conditions of the people taking care of children.

CHILDCARE AND REVOLUTION

Women as women, not just as proletarians who happen to be female, have consistently raised this aspect of capitalism's inhumanity. Women have been at the forefront of every revolution. Fighting for issues that women raise **as women** is crucial to the next revolution's success in making a new beginning in human development after capitalism. Childcare workers experience a contradiction: is their purpose educating children for the needs of capital or is it the development of the whole human being? Resolving the contradiction in their work can set afoot a new human being.

The heart of the struggle is overcoming the commodity fetish. It means new human relations in production, which under capitalism are social relations between things—commodities and capital. Without overthrowing capitalism's alienated labor there is no escape from commodification. The question it raises is, what kind of labor replaces it? Women are challenging **now** what labor means when it is **not** the alienated labor under capitalism. What is human labor? The issues women keep bringing up of care and education are one way to visualize the opposite of alienated labor even before the revolution, as the future we want to create.

In the *Critique of the Gotha Program* Marx talks about the transition to a new society. He says: "Before [the part of the total product to serve as means of consumption] is divided among the individuals, there has to be deducted again, from it...that which is intended for the common satisfaction of needs, such as schools, health services, etc. From the outset, this part grows considerably in comparison with present-day society, and it grows in proportion as the new society develops."

Childcare providers' demands may seem to be very modest. But these issues have been part of every revolutionary movement since the Paris Commune and probably before. Marx spoke to their aspirations by envisioning a totally new beginning when we no longer separate the development of "productive forces" from "the all-around development of the individual."

Manuel Zelaya returned unannounced to Tegucigalpa on Sept. 21. The wave of mass enthusiasm triggered by his return was put down with arbitrary jailings, widespread use of tear gas in the streets and private homes with families inside, gunshots, 48-hour sustained curfews, detention of the wounded in hospitals without access to Red Cross observation, torture, mass incarceration in stadiums, and water and utility cut-offs. At least 24 people have been killed, three of them children who suffocated from the use of toxic gas. This is the most violent political repression by any Latin American regime in more than 20 years.

All of us in the Feminist Writers Network left Honduras the day before Zelaya's return. We had gone there in solidarity with the Feminist Resistance Collective. Our analysis was that the resistance to the coup would last a long time, strengthening its demands and deepening its political analysis through the dialogue brought about by the gathering of dissatisfied citizens and diverse social organizations in the public space. A day later this outlook had radically changed.

Zelaya returned to Honduras after crossing over from Guatemala on foot. From the Brazilian embassy he has asked the international community to intervene to stop the violence against the general population. He himself runs the risk of being assassinated by snipers hidden outside or being taken by soldiers.

In spite of the total lack of legality of the coup, the international media has echoed the paranoia expressed by the coup leaders that Zelaya was trying to impose a Chávez-like constitutional reform so he could be reelected. Also problematic is that a part of the Latin American Left insists that Zelaya is merely a populist, underlining the fact that he and Micheletti both belong to the Liberal Party. This attitude lets the coup off the hook too easily. The supposed people's governments of Nicaragua and El Salvador haven't condemned the coup very forcefully at all. In the end, it is the people of Honduras who are paying the consequences of the military violence let loose by Congress. But in their Resistance, the Honduran people have reclaimed the dignity they lost in the 1980s, a decade of intense repression, when they couldn't stop their country from becoming the launching ground of the United States against the Salvadoran guerrilla fighters and the revolutionary Sandinista government.

—Francesca Gargallo, September 24, 2009

U.S. STRUGGLE FOR HEALTHCARE REFORM

The Mad as Hell Doctors' national tour in support of healthcare reform stopped here Sept. 25 to support striking workers at SK Hand Tools (see story, page 3). Doctors, nurses and other supporters walked the picket line and held up banners supporting a single-payer plan for healthcare reform.

Barbara Matthews, of the Mad as Hell Doctors, said, "We're supporting the workers who have lost their healthcare without warning. We support a single-payer plan where this kind of injustice wouldn't happen. It would redirect the money that goes to insurers into a single agency to pay healthcare providers directly. There would be no restrictions on free choice because all providers would be covered. There also wouldn't be the huge overhead we have now with the insurance companies, no huge staffs being paid to deny claims. Healthcare should be a human right, not something for a company to make profits."

The Mad Docs' support of our picket line was appreciated. As one striking SK worker put it, "We've been out 30 days but it feels like yesterday. When the boss comes by and sees us smiling, he doesn't like that!"

Strike Supporter
Chicago

A group of us healthcare and labor activists handed out informational leaflets at several Whole Foods stores in San Francisco in August, as part of an on-going action organized by members of the United Food and Commercial Workers. It was to protest an article by Whole Foods CEO John Mackey, who has vigorously crusaded against healthcare reform, and who even said in a *Wall Street Journal* article that if people get sick, it's their own fault. He also has a long history of union-busting. Our leaflet, calling for ousting him as CEO, was generally well received by a widely varied crowd.

After a manager came to sniff us out and left, a young Hispanic worker came out laughing. He said, "The people working here love your campaign, even if they're scared to talk. The health plan he gives us is disgusting. Since you started doing this, sales have dropped down to half. We're glad." This was music to our ears out on the sidewalk. Underneath the glitter of San Francisco, there is a lot going on. Heads up.

D. Cheneville
Oakland, Cal.

In "When Unions Think Like Capitalists" (June-July *N&L*), Htun Lin makes the core point that a union can be a worker's best friend, or worst backstabbing enemy. As a former union member I know he is right. He is also right about the "highfalutin' rhetoric over universal healthcare," which is socialized medicine by another name.

The great socialist thinkers of the 20th century—Albert Einstein, George Orwell, Raya Dunayevskaya, George Bernard Shaw and their like—did not

mince words or engage in semantic games. They spoke to reality. Lin also accurately implies that anyone who believes this administration is going to deliver bona fide socialized medicine by any name needs to realize it ain't gonna happen. As one writer in *Time* recently put it, "The only guy who really called this right was Karl Marx."

R. Zani
Tennessee Colony, Texas

Paul Krugman's indictment of President Obama's reform efforts, in the Aug. 21 *New York Times*, seemed to me an important criticism precisely because he doesn't come at it just from an "economic" point of view, like Obama's technocratic "experts" on healthcare. The "wonks" have taken over the Obama administration. He is increasingly looking like Clinton redux, trying to satisfy everybody. It's why even his progressive supporters are starting to abandon Obamacare. Krugman characterized it as a "trust problem." I would call it an "ideological" problem.

Healthcare worker
California

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IRAN

The articles on Iran in the June/July issue were refreshing. It was good to read reports on the disputed election from a leftist perspective. None of the coverage I have read mentions the widespread support Ahmadinejad enjoys among Iranians in the nation's countryside. They are overwhelmingly religious and conservative and view Ahmadinejad as a regular "fella" as opposed to the clerics that have dominated the executive since the 1979 Revolution. To many people in the countryside, Ahmadinejad is treating the urban elitist population centers with the same neglect and disregard that, in their eyes, characterized the regimes of Rafsanjani and Khatami. Thank you for providing a view from the Left.

R. Holbrook
Waynesburg, Pa.

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HOMEGROWN FASCISM

There are many ominous tendencies being reflected in the reports of the demonstrations against healthcare and other administration policies. While some of this is legitimate anger against the unemployment and bailouts in Wall Street, there are also undertones of racism and rabid right-wing demagoguery that are alarmingly reminiscent of the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy. It must be remembered that fascism emerged from the legitimate concerns of the German people that grew out of the Great Depression, and Hitler and his Brown Shirts, financed by German capitalists, succeeded in channeling that discontent into anti-Semitism and the

READERS' VIEWS

horrors of a fascist regime. Fascism does not come from abroad. It comes from home, and we must all be aware of that.

World War II Veteran
Detroit

I see a pattern in the way businesses are using the crisis in today's economy to have workers compete for jobs and barely make a living wage, which they hope will result in workers not making any waves about the treatment they get or the corruption they see. I see a pattern also in the rise in hate groups that is reported by Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Sue
Chicago

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ENVIRONMENTALISM AND ECOSOCIALISM

Franklin Dmitryev's essay on ecosocialism in the August-September issue shows that ecosocialism has an objective of abolishing capitalism and a theory



of how to achieve new social relations that, however, don't have human beings at its center. It is at this crucial point

that the objective and the theory are not in sync. Marx's philosophy of revolution spells out specifically what is unique to capitalist relations that needs to be overcome if a new set of social relations is to be created.

Capital's integument is value production and its inverted relationship of subject and object. It is thereby human alienation. Only in uprooting value production in its alienated form can humanity regain itself. It can then become human activity in all its moments, as in labor, man/woman relations and which also includes human beings' relationship with nature.

Faruq
Crescent City, Cal.

For Marx, capital's technological force and scale of social production were flawed because of humans being dominated by their own production. Ecosocialism is based on an analysis of self-alienation but often forgets the struggle side—the human side. It returns to nature as something external.

Healthcare worker
California

Three hundred demonstrators trekked from downtown Richmond to the Chevron oil refinery in Point Richmond here on Aug. 15 to protest Chevron's plan to process a heavier, dirtier crude oil. The fact is that doing so will only add to the 1,000 tons of pollution and greenhouse gases the plant already emits annually. Chevron insists it isn't what goes into the refinery that matters, but what comes out. Protesters counter "dirt in = dirt out" since it is not likely Chevron would take in an obviously cheaper raw material only to spend inordinate amounts of time and money cleaning it up.

David M'Oto
California

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WORKERS NEEDING HELP

Baldemar Velasquez, president of FLOC (Farm Labor Organizing Committee), spoke at a Central United Methodist Church's Peace and Justice service about the need to help change working conditions of FLOC field laborers harvesting tobacco, vegetables and fruit in North and South Carolina, Florida and the Midwest, including Michigan.

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THE GERMAN ELECTION

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right Christian Democrats may have won the recent election, but the good news about the election results was that the small third parties made significant strides in gaining popularity, which may mean that the two main parties (Tweedle Dum, Tweedle Dee) are being abandoned by the populace. Perhaps Germany will lead the way for America to experience a future fall of the bi-partisan parties of Wall Street, and the emergence of grassroots popular parties, who are now ill-funded, ill-organized and ill-recognized. That is mainly by design of the establishment, and the electorate's sheepish following of the donkey and the elephant. Then again, perhaps Germany is not a good example to follow. The most memorable time a "third party" made headway there, wasn't it the beginning of the Third Reich and the emergence of a little-known "Congressman" named Hitler, campaigning for his version of "Socialism" for Germany?

Observer
California

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KOLAKOWSKI'S LEGACY

Kevin Michaels' excellent piece on "Kolakowski's legacy" (Aug.-Sept. *N&L*) shows the positivism of his earlier work. He wrote in *Main Currents of Marxism*, "Marxism had been the greatest fantasy of our century. It was a dream offering the prospect of a society of perfect unity, in which all human aspirations would be fulfilled and all values reconciled."

Then he continued, "Marxism has been frozen and immobilized for decades as the ideological superstructure of a totalitarian political movement, and in consequence has lost touch with intellectual developments and social realities. The hope that it could be revived and made fruitful once again proved to be an illusion. As an explanatory system it is dead, nor does it offer any method that can be effectively used to interpret modern life, foresee the future, or cultivate utopian projection." Kolakowski further argues that Stalinism was not a perversion of Marxist thought, but rather its natural conclusion.

Obviously, our Marxist-Humanist vision is different. The lines I've just quoted remind me of living under capitalism.

Jerry
Chicago

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A CRITIQUE OF THE LEFT

I have a critique of the Left: many use academic language to impress others, and things are not explained to the masses. In fact, they are confused by leftists trying to impress one another. We need to debate terms, because people want to grasp ideas. Language is very important.

Studying Marx
New York

OPEN LETTER TO RON HUBERMAN

I want to send this Open Letter to Ron Huberman, the new CEO of the Chicago Public Schools. I need to know when does he plan to change the name of Bartolome de las Casas Therapeutic Occupational High School? It needs to be changed, since Bartolome de las Casas was one of the main advocates for using individuals from the continent of Africa as slaves. In his own writings de las Casas says Africans were not completely human beings. I'm waiting for his reply.

I have a replacement for the current school name: it should be Toussaint L'Ouverture School. Here are three reasons for that choice:



1) Toussaint L'Ouverture was born in Haiti, where Jean Baptiste Point DuSable was also born. Mr. DuSable was the first individual other than Native Americans to build a permanent dwelling in what is now Chicago.

2) Toussaint L'Ouverture helped end slavery in Haiti.

3) Toussaint L'Ouverture fought under General Casimir Pulaski in helping the Thirteen Colonies (U.S.) against England.

Sincerely,

George W. Smith, Jr.
Chicago

MANY FIGHTING HONORABLY TO END ILLEGAL WAR

Lt. Ehren Watada's three-year fight with the Army is over. His resignation has been accepted and he will be discharged, although not honorably. He is "glad to bring the chapter to a close and move on." He is 31 and may want a life.

As for the Army, it is probably relieved Watada let it off the hook. He was not "answering a higher call" as one well-meaning Congressman claimed. He was following the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), according to which it is one's duty to disobey an unlawful order. The lieutenant has consistently maintained that the U.S. prosecution of its war in Iraq is illegal. The Army has dodged a bullet in not having to defend in a court of law its attacks on the Iraqi people.

I hope Ehren Watada returns someday to finish the fight if only to clear his name and that of many others who also had the courage to do what they believed was right.

Sansei
Oakland, Cal.

This is an update on new programs initiated by the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO): "Cover Me" will empower military service members through education of their rights under the UCMJ and through the military regulations that will protect them. We are making contact with members of the chaplain corps, on-base social workers, mental health professionals and patient representatives to encourage their strong support. In just the three months since June, "Cover Me" volunteers have assisted with 17 CO applications and provided advocacy on discharges for 59 Marines, 26 Navy, 90 Army, 5 Air Force and 45 Reservists. We are now launching a new program to assist LGBTQ active duty service members.

CCCO cannot, however, survive without the continued help of generous supporters.

Wendy Carson
Executive Director, CCCO
405 14th St. #205, Oakland, Cal. 94612

Many veterans returning from the

wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are finding conditions at home so intolerable that they are becoming increasingly desperate. This often results in broken families and rising suicides when the jobs they had are no longer available because of the economic meltdown and their frustrations spin out of control. We know the right-wing militia groups have stepped up their recruiting efforts among the returning veterans who are disciplined and have many military skills. Desperate people can make desperate decisions, and I see more desperation in the U.S. today than ever before in my lifetime.

Old Veteran
Detroit

DEBATING THE
LGBT MARCH —
FOR EQUALITY OR
LIBERATION?

There's a debate going on about whether or not to support the upcoming Oct. 10-11 March in Washington for gay rights. Before Obama was elected, many of us felt we were going to get some rights. But there has been a lot of disappointment so it's understandable why the march was called. For it to be a success there have to be a lot of us there. And for it to work we have to make specific demands.

How do we defend equality—which is what the March was declared to be calling for. Will the March do that? The leaders are talking about non-violent civil disobedience, marches, lobbying. We can do all of that, but what we are working for is important to be clear about. Ultimately, how do we defend equality? Part of my way of seeing what is involved is through the philosophy of Marxism. What is important to me is being able to live your life meaningfully. A quote from Rosa Luxemburg that Raya Dunayevskaya discussed in her book



Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution speaks to that. It was from one of Luxemburg's letters from prison to a woman comrade in which she wrote:

"See to it that you stay human.... Being human means joyfully throwing your whole life 'on the scales of destiny' when need be, but all the while rejoicing in every sunny day and every beautiful cloud."

That—being human—is where we want to go.

Elise
Chicago

I don't support the March for a number of reasons. The one demand on equal protection is narrow and simplistic and gives power to the politicians rather than the people. It is unrealistic to pressure politicians to reverse bad legislation. The history of the Civil Rights Movement shows that once the pressure is lifted, the impact of the laws gets chipped away. You see it with the right to abortion. I'm against Prop. 8, but the institution of marriage is very sexist and I feel it should be abolished. The patriarchal institution sets up a power dynamic on queer couples, especially regarding property and child custody. I think we should fight for universal healthcare so all could benefit, not just those in relationships.

In my view we need to create a movement that demands our liberation, not just equality. I think we should fight for universal healthcare, and against having poor youth slaughtered in our society. We have to oppose queer bashing and fight for the rights of queer seniors, as well. We also need to fight the violence against transgendered people.

Darrell
Chicago

I am with the Gay Liberation Network and what makes us unique is that we're based on the politics of solidarity, which means that if we expect other oppressed groups to support us, we have to make it clear that we support their demands. So we get involved with issues like immigration rights, universal healthcare, and we've been to a number of demonstrations in support of youth

who were gunned down by police, without asking what their attitude was on gay rights. We've been involved in the campaign to free Mumia as well as anti-war marches. One of the things that led to the passage of Prop. 8 was not reaching out to these other communities.

Some of us are organizing a picket line around the White House. We'll call for Obama and the Democrats to be held accountable and make it clear we don't depend on them to hand us our rights on a silver platter.

Marriage rights are important to a lot of people, so I say yes, fight for that democratic right and also fight for the overthrow of capitalism. Democratic rights are indivisible. We have to fight for all of them.

Member GLN
Chicago

WHO READS NEWS & LETTERS?

We appreciate your continued efforts in making visible the issues that concern us and affect women, as well as the need for key partners to take action. Your publication is a very useful resource and a good addition to our documentation center, where it will be utilized by various researchers, activists, and students who visit the center. We look forward to continued collaboration.

Juliet Were Oguttu
Isis-WICCE, Plot 23 Bukoto Street
Kampala, Uganda

Your labor reporting always covers strikes and labor news not covered anywhere else. Thank you.

Stanley Rosebud Rosen, professor
emeritus of University of Illinois
Santa Fe, NM

N&L remains unique and an inspiration. The Perspectives for this year were excellent and well-developed and I agree with mostly everything.

Richard Greeman, co-founder of Praxis
Research and Education Center
France

Editor's note: The Marxist-Humanist Perspectives for 2009-2010 are available upon request.

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by RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao 30th Anniversary edition, 2003.....\$24.95
- Marxism and Freedom: from 1776 until Today 2000 edition. Foreword by Joel Kovel.....\$24.95
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- News and Letters Committees Constitution.....44 ¢ postage
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- Guides to Collection and Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development Full description of 15,000-page microfilm collection.....\$4.50
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EDITORIAL

Specters haunting G-20

The leaders of the world's biggest economies met Sept. 24-25 at the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh. As with previous G-8 summits, which the G-20 has now officially replaced, the state guardians of the world economy were cocooned by a massive and often brutal police presence, from thousands of demonstrating youth, labor and peace activists. Aside from agreeing to peer review each other's economic policies, the summit was basically lots of happy talk about having saved the world economy from going over the abyss when one year ago an economic meltdown of the system of finance capital threatened an immediate onset of a Great Depression.

What was "saved," with huge and continuous infusions of public monies, was the finance sector, led now by even bigger too-big-to-fail banks again making record profits and fueling yet another speculative bubble. The \$700 billion TARP bailout was only the beginning. The Federal Reserve Bank is now in the midst of a \$1.45 trillion spending program to buy bad assets from big banks, sending them on their way to repack-age risky investments.

Underneath the G-20 happy talk is anxiety over the creation of value in the real economy, where the damage from the world economy's first contraction since the 1930s is permanent; where unemployment, called a "lagging indicator," is now officially at 9.8% in the

BLACK/REDVIEW

continued from p. 1

Marine-trained predecessor to the current army, was for Haitians to fight other Haitians. During the U.S. occupation the *Garde* participated in joint action with the Marines against peasant nationalists, killing at least 6,000 peasants led by Charlemagne Peralte and Batrville. Another 5,500 peasants died in forced labor camps the *Garde* ran for the occupiers.

These figures are only the official estimates; no one knows the exact number of Haitians killed and executed by the Marines and the *Garde*. The record of the 1921 U.S. Senate hearings on the massacre of Haitians is filled with details of atrocities.

If one digs into the history of the development of the Haitian army, only one conclusion emerges: it has played an objective role in establishing U.S. hegemony in Haiti.

There is nothing new in the U.S. practice of setting up puppet armies to terrorize indigenous peoples in the Caribbean and Central America. However, the Haitian army is unique; it is the oldest and largest puppet army in the Caribbean and has long been the pathway to power for a succession of dictatorial presidents, including Francois Duvalier. Duvalier played internal politics with generals to establish his personal hegemony over the army, but now neither he nor his son Jean-Claude Duvalier is around; only the army remains.

The present stalemate between the totalitarian



Student protests continue in Haiti in 2009 over cancelled classes.

army and the forces of liberal reform has brought Haiti to a crossroads in history that could go either way. The masses of Haitian people could impose their own solution by uprooting the army or "reform" could be imposed from the outside.

In the U.S. Senate, Bob Graham is recommending that George H. W. Bush get the so-called democratic governments of this hemisphere to organize a multinational "peacekeeping force to assure Haitian stability." The key word is "stability," meaning that they don't want the masses to engage in their own self-determination.

The trouble with outside "liberation" is that it is limited to the goals of the "liberators." It is hard to believe that Senator Graham's idea of "liberation" is the same as that of a worker getting low wages in an American-owned firm in Haiti.

The absolute opposition to the Haitian army comes from the Haitian masses who want to uproot the army, which is an outpost of American imperialism. If the Haitian masses did that, it would be a great historic leap; precisely the type of historic leap that their slave ancestors made when they translated "The Rights of Man" to mean self-emancipation and rose up in revolt against their French slave masters.

U.S.; where real investment has collapsed because even a much reduced rate of profit cannot be attained until a lot more of the capital built up during a series of speculative booms has been destroyed; where new tensions between the U.S. and China, now merely sparring over trade in tires, could bring global finance to a standstill.

The world's producers of value, workers, especially the poor, are the ones really suffering. Though nearly half the world's population—over three billion people—live on less than \$2.50 a day, according to the World Bank the crisis pushed another 90 million people into extreme poverty—living on less than \$1.25 a day.

The Great Recession may be declared over by the lords of finance, but investment for growth in the real economy where value is created has come to a standstill. In place of a sub-prime mortgage bubble, new economic activity has come from stimulus spending and inventory replacement. Behind the photo ops, tensions among the G-20—in particular the "G-2," the U.S. and China—are fermenting over global trade imbalances. Every economy—except the U.S., whose dollar is the world's reserve currency—faces structural adjustments aimed at the standard of living of its poor and working people under the impact of such imbalances. For now, the only thread holding back a blow-up over the dollar among state-capitalist finance centers is not very reassuring: "mutually assured financial destruction."

The barriers to productive investment, and therefore to accumulation in the real economy, portend an even more total day of reckoning. For capital that can only mean a deeper collapse, wherein finance capitalists, whom Marx called the mere "trustees" for capital's social ownership of production, will continue to transparently loot the public treasury to preserve the irrational capital relation at all cost. But this is also transparent for ordinary working people who are outraged and looking for a way to free themselves of being socialized according to the needs for capital accumulation. Never before has there been a greater need to return to Marx, not only for his prediction of total crises, multitudes of unemployed and a falling rate of profit, but his concept of liberation and human solidarity beyond capitalism.

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Robert Taliaferro

Youth! If of a certain race, creed, or economic background, this five-letter word can be lauded as a blessing—or touted as anathema.

In the world of Barack Obama, youth are at the core of his ideas for the future of the U.S. So it should not be surprising that he, like presidents before him, would wish to address this future constituency, allowing students to hear from "their" president.

At another time in history this would not be an issue, but those who feel the U.S. has changed, need look no further than Texas or Wisconsin to see an overwhelming constituency of those who feel that a message from a person of color has no place in their child's education.

The opposition to Obama's school address is said to be a product of ultra-conservative Right activists such as Rush Limbaugh, and though this is partially true, to attribute this completely to such individuals would be a smoke-and-mirror illusion that hides the real problem.

What is truly amazing is the number of Black and white intellectuals—both liberal and moderate—who seem taken aback by the vehement opposition to the core ideas Obama presents: universal healthcare; wars on poverty, illiteracy, broken families, joblessness—things that have been on the agendas of presidents in the past, and that will be on agendas of presidents in the future.

What is equally amazing is that those very same persons can't bring themselves to verbalize the fundamental problem that has tainted the U.S. experience since the country was founded: the issue of race.

Race is as viable today as it has been throughout this country's history. In the South, it took a \$2.3 billion settlement against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1999 for the government to admit discriminatory actions towards Black farmers. Ironically, the USDA has blocked many claims to that settlement.

In New Orleans, people of color have essentially been blocked from returning to the city due to "the stark exposure of an economic apartheid" (*Colorlines*, July-August 2009) which has been going on for nearly four years.

In California and other border states, children of immigrants born in this country will not have the same rights as other children born in this country because of the status of their parents. Shades of Dred Scott abound.

Fortunately, the hatemongers and doomsayers are not in the majority, for if they were, neither Barack H. Obama nor any person of color would reside in the White House as anything but a servant.

The fact that a Black man was elected as president is an achievement in itself, but what's more an achievement is that for the first time in its history, this country has to actually address race openly.

Racial, class and gender politics extend well beyond the scope of Obama, or any president regardless of

Victims of police killings

Inglewood, Cal.—On July 28, 75 people—mostly Black with some Latinos/as—attended a town hall meeting here to address the continuing killings and beatings of unarmed youths by Inglewood police. The police were invited but did not show up.

Participants spoke of police attitudes and shootings of Black youths, and problems of gang violence. They spoke of racial profiling and police seeing all Black and Brown youth as hardcore gang members. One person said the police use a South Gate Latino gang's racist attitude toward Black gangs, to have them fighting each other.

Suggested improvements included petitions for reform starting with "human rights" for youths, putting cameras on police cars, re-enacting every incident of police killing/brutality for the community at large, and "make noise." The meeting ended with an announcement of an organizing meeting for a demonstration.

Over 100 spirited people, mostly youths, marched with family members of seven recent victims of the Inglewood Police Department in August. Demonstrators included members of Community Call to Action; Youth Justice Coalition, a multi-racial group that opposes racial profiling and the criminalization and imprisonment of poor youths; and Cease Fire Committee, a community gang-intervention coalition founded after Stanley Tookie Williams was executed.

One speaker said the practice of lying on police reports must be stopped; another said the Inglewood Police Review Board has no power over the police department.

All slain youths were either Black or Brown and unarmed. Thirteen-year-old Devon Brown and 14-year-old Rafael Ramos are two examples. Demonstrators carried posters memorializing victims of various police departments, including the LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department), Los Angeles County Sheriff, Torrance Police and Downey Police. In 2005, three-year-old Suzie Poro Lopez, held in her father's arms, was killed by a hail of bullets from the LAPD. Taisha Miller, a young Black girl, was similarly killed by Riverside Police while sitting in her car. These are all old cases where police are never punished, even when victims are unarmed and/or shot in the back.

—Basho

Obama and U.S. youth

their name or the color of their skin, and ultimately the U.S. experience will have a new chapter written that expands upon its better virtues.

What scares closet bigots the most is that at the tip of this revolutionary process will be this nation's youth, living in a time when a Black man—or a woman—or any person of color, can actually become president.

The definitive aspect of the U.S. experience will be written by the generation of youth who were not tempered by a sense of hopelessness, but rather those who grew up in the time of the Obama presidency.

Corrupt Calif. prisons

Los Angeles—A recent newspaper article reported on the overcrowding and terrible conditions in California prisons. I know about this because my son is in prison. In the past, I have been active with a group of mothers who have sons in prison and were trying to change prison conditions. There is not equal justice. We were trying to change the huge difference in those sentenced for cocaine inhaled as a powder and crack cocaine. Black crack users were ending up with much longer sentences than whites who used the white powder. I see this difference as well when some Afro-American youth are charged with Grand Theft Auto for stealing a car, while white youth are charged with joyriding.

But a lot of problems in prisons affect both white and Black: the harsh three-strikes-and-you're-out prison sentences, the terrible medical care you get, etc. They even charge the prisoners for seeing a doctor.

At the heart of the prisons I see two problems: First, there is no real attempt at rehabilitation, and second, there is so much corruption. Young men no longer get any education or training when they are in prison. They come out worse than when they went in. I know an intelligent young man who came out and then went right back in for selling drugs. It is terrible to see them come out and go right back.

The corruption is on so many different levels. It used to be that when you wanted to send something for someone in prison you went out and bought it and sent it to him. But now my family has to go online and order what they want from a company which sells it at three times the price you can get it by yourself. In Los Angeles County the former sheriff's daughter is running the concessions for small items like candy in the local jail, again at high prices. These various companies and operators are making lots of money from prisoners.

But the worst is the corruption when it comes to drugs. There are more drugs in prison than in the streets. It couldn't happen without the corruption of many officials. If you have the money, you can get what you want.

—Georgiana Stewart

Afghan lives, freedom sucked into U.S. quagmire

continued from p. 1

closing early, opening late, or not at all.

Women were severely disenfranchised. Although much was made of the fact that a few women ran for office and two for president, their faces were banned from the ballots, posters torn down, travel restricted, their very lives threatened. The turnout of women voters was much lower than the last election. Many polling stations for women, which are separate from where men vote, never opened. Furthermore, a woman's husband can vote for her, thus stealing her vote at his whim. Tribal chiefs, or warlords, boasted of casting votes for whole villages. If a runoff election happens, at the earliest in October and perhaps not until April, it leaves a leadership vacuum that the Taliban are already filling.

As we go to press, Obama is reported to be mulling over his alternatives. While claiming he only wants to do "the right thing," his overwhelming pragmatism only asks, "will it work?" He has said, "There is no immediate decision pending on resources, because one of the things I'm absolutely clear about is you have to get the strategy right." When the question is only what will work, and the bottom line is fighting al-Qaeda, then the "right" strategy is not about the freedom and self-determination of the people of Afghanistan. For the Afghan population equally abhorrent as a troop increase is the strategy for more Predator drones that bomb civilians along with the Taliban, cruise missiles that massacre even more civilians, raids by Special Operations commandos, and payment to warlords to do things the way the U.S. wants. This strategy in Pakistan has created hatred of the U.S.

AFGHAN DEMOCRACY IN HISTORY: MYTH AND REALITY

The disregard of the Afghan people's deep desire for freedom is unseparated from the racist myth that Afghans don't understand democracy, that they have a tribal mentality, and are not ready for modernity. History reveals a very different reality.

As long ago as 1959, *purdah*—the banning of women from public life—stopped being mandatory and women began to enroll in universities, which became co-educational. Women also began to enter the paid workforce and the government.

Afghanistan could have experienced a new beginning after the bloody coup of 1978. As the Marxist-Humanist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in 1980: "The coup which brought the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) to power had popular support. It established the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, confiscated all the royalist lands and holdings, announced land reforms and the abolition of all feudal and pre-feudal relations. The party had won power in a single day of fighting because there had been great unrest in that poverty-stricken land, directed against [then President] Daoud..." This new beginning was not to be. Dunayevskaya continues: "...within a short year—the fratricidal factionalism **within** the PDPA...saw the revolution devouring itself. Land reform lagged behind; women's liberation was hardly begun; disease and poverty were still rampant. And not too far in the background stood Russia, ready with aid and arms and wanting, above all, **not** to see a genuine social revolution anywhere."

Russia's invasion plunged the country into war that did not end with their departure in 1989 or even with the fall of the Russian puppets in 1992, and the establishment of an Islamic State with an Islamic Jihad Council. Burhanuddin Rabbani—later the titular head of the Northern Alliance, a loose conglomeration of warlords—was proclaimed President, while warring factions continued to slaughter civilians. In opposition to the brutal Rabbani regime and other warlords, the Taliban was born in 1994 with Pakistani support, and advanced rapidly, promising to unite the country under one leadership and to end crime and corruption. Many accepted them as a better alternative than the horrible conditions under Northern Alliance warlords.

* "Carter's Drive to War," *News & Letters*, March 1980.



Malalai Joya

By September 1996 the Taliban captured Kabul, made an alliance with the extreme anti-woman fundamentalist party Hezbi Wahdat, and the warlord Dostum, who was recently invited by Karzai back into the country and government. The Taliban imposed horrendous conditions on the entire population, but especially on women. In 1998 they captured Mazar-i-Sharif and massacred thousands of civilians.

SQUANDERED NEW BEGINNINGS

Afghanistan had other chances to become a place where its citizens could enjoy some freedom, but the U.S. smothered every recent opportunity. One was the July 2002 *loya jirga*, a traditional political meeting of tribal leaders and representatives. It met to set up the government structure.

The U.S. decreed the forces responsible for countless brutalities under the former Rabbani government as the decision-makers at this *loya jirga*. It did not start that way. As *loya jirga* delegates Omar Zakhilwal and Adeena Niazi tell us: "Men and women mingled openly and comfortably. In tolerant and lively exchanges, we discussed the compatibility of women's rights with our Islamic traditions. Women played a leading role at these meetings....The one issue that united the delegates above all others was the urgency of reducing the power of warlords and establishing a truly representative government."

There was a grassroots movement to nominate the former king, Zahir Shah, as head of state as a counterbalance to the Northern Alliance. Then the U.S. stepped in and postponed the *loya jirga* for close to two days while it strong-armed the king into renouncing any role in the government-to-be.

After any semblance of democracy was destroyed by the U.S., Zakhilwal and Niazi report, "the atmosphere at the *loya jirga* changed radically. The gathering was now teeming with intelligence agents who openly threatened reform-minded delegates, especially women. Fundamentalist leaders branded critics of the warlords as traitors to Islam and circulated a petition denouncing the Women's Affairs Minister Sima Samar as 'Afghanistan's Salman Rushdie,'" implying she should be murdered as a heretic. Terrorizing their critics, the warlords came out in control of the country.

Another possible new beginning came with the process of ratifying the Afghan Constitution. That *loya jirga* on Jan. 4, 2004, was touted by the U.S. government and press as a breakthrough for human rights—particularly women's rights. Nothing could be further from the truth. Of course a constitution can't make women free, but the Afghan Constitution is so flawed that it created a framework for the strengthening of warlords and the further Islamicization of the state.

The intimidation, silencing of differing views, undemocratic and sexist nature of the proceedings were made public by a 25-year-old social worker. Malalai Joya took the floor and demanded to know: "Why have you again selected as committee chairmen those criminals who have brought disasters for the Afghan people? In my opinion they should be taken to the World Court."

The assembly chairman, Sebaghatullah Mojedidi, tried to have her thrown out. Abdur Rasul Sayyaf, the Northern Alliance deputy prime minister, gave a 15-minute tirade against Joya, slandering her as a communist and "criminal." In addition, Mojedidi refused to allow a vote on a petition with over 151 signatures from *loya jirga* members to change the country's name from the "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" to the "Republic of Afghanistan." He publicly called them "infidels," thus placing them in danger of assassination.

The Constitution says that "no law can be contrary

to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam." This opened the judiciary to people like the then chief justice, Fazl Hadi Shinwari, who told representatives of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom that he accepted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights with three exceptions: freedom of expression, freedom of religion and equality of the sexes. "This is the only law," the chief justice told them, pointing to the Koran.

The U.S. and its minions did nothing to democratize the Afghan Constitution. Rather it was women, ethnic Hazaras, ethnic Uzbeks and others who put their lives in jeopardy as they tried to make the Constitution a document that represents their aspirations for a free multiethnic Afghanistan.

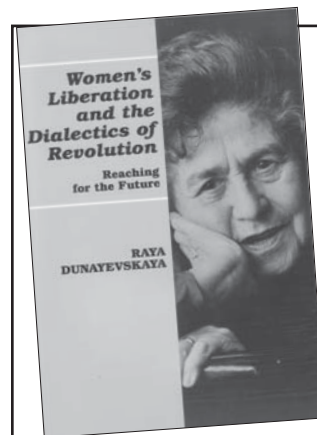
In all the scenarios spun out of the heads of U.S. leaders, none of them consider either the desire or the ability of Afghan people to govern their own lives and nation. Yet that is the only solution.

Here is how Shazia, a member of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) who spoke recently in the U.S., put it: "If the troops leave Afghanistan, of course for a few years there will be wars... Years and years of struggle is needed....We will give sacrifices. But we will do that ourselves. Because history has shown that no country can grant peace and security to another country as a gift. That is the responsibility of that country, that people, to gain those values...by their resistance and by their struggle."

And this is part of what Malalai Joya said on the day of the Afghan election: "Democracy will never come to Afghanistan through the barrel of a gun, or from the cluster bombs dropped by foreign forces. The struggle will be long and difficult, but the values of real democracy, human rights and women's rights will only be won by the Afghan people themselves...."

As we put it in our Editorial in the last issue of *News & Letters*: "The truly decisive division is that between the rulers and the ruled in each country. The only genuine opposition to war comes from the revolt and resistance of the people, whether that be the uprising in Iran sparked by the stolen election or the mass resistance against the coup in Honduras. As News and Letters Committees has asked since our founding, 'Are you with the people struggling for a totally new way of life, or with capitalism fighting to perpetuate itself?'"

"Our opposition to war must therefore spell out not only what we are against but what we are for: a world of new human relations, beginning at the point of production, and encompassing all the dimensions opened up by humanity's many-faceted struggles for freedom."



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and the Dialectics of
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Québec: Taking Back 'Les Plaines'

The 250th anniversary of the Sept. 13, 1759, fall of Québec City to British forces was marked by a massive demonstration of a new type on the Plaines d'Abraham (Plains of Abraham). Over a 24-hour period, over 20,000 people took part in a speak-out about Québécois and Canadian history called the "Moulin à Paroles," "Chat-terbox" in English.

In each of three eight-hour cycles, 156 historic documents were read aloud by various people, including well-known personalities. Amongst these documents were the horrible Durham Report of 1839 which called for an end to the use of the French language in Canada, Pierre Laporte's plea to former Québec Premier Robert Bourassa to save his life during the 1970 "October Crisis," and Bourassa's somber June 22, 1990, discourse after the collapse of the Meech Lake Accord.

The hitch came when parts of the 1970 FLQ (Front de libération du Québec) Manifesto, read by the Haitian singer Luck Mervil, were included in the programme. This gave Québec Premier Jean Charest and Québec City mayor Régis Labeaume a pretext to turn down their invitations to participate and to denounce the event as "separatist."

Originally, federal officials had planned to stage a costume re-enactment of the battle as a cutesy touristic spectacle. But after many people objected and threat-

ened to protest, those plans were cancelled. Planning officials then claimed that there had been threats of violence and made veiled allusions to "terrorism." We are used to such slanders in Québec. As is often the case, the most serious assaults on the rights of Québec's people have come from elements of our own "elite."

The "Moulin à Paroles" was a huge success. As people listened to the speeches, they mingled amid dozens of literature tables, kiosks, and discussion groups on historical, political, social and philosophical issues. This was a time to delve back into our real history on our own terms. We must expose the fraud of "multiculturalism" set in place by Trudeau in 1968, which is a cloak to hide the imposition of English-language corporate culture upon the entire country. It trivializes the real history of the peoples of Canada—French, English, Amerindian, immigrants—by reducing their experience to mere "culture," and it obliterates the history and struggles of French-speaking Canadians.

In contrast to that policy, the Québec of today is an increasingly pluralistic society in the true sense. Regaining the Plaines d'Abraham is part of the process of regaining the dignity of our thoughts and ideas, of our history as one of freedom, of real living human beings, and an understanding from which we can perceive and determine our own future.

—P.J. Ville de Québec

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GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS
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Protests against climate suicide

Chicago—The urgency of countering climate change was on the minds of the 80 of us who rallied in the Loop on Aug. 31 for action on the issue. Events like this are showing that the more mainstream environmental groups—like 1Sky, which called this rally—are connecting more with people of color and workers, who have long battled pollution whether or not they were recognized as "environmentalists."

However, the contradictions of this movement were visible. Mainstream activists delivered an uninspiring, technocratic message that touted various technologies and included advocating a carbon tax, which would proportionally be heaviest on the poor. Supposedly, this would not hurt people already struggling to afford rent, food, utilities and healthcare, because a portion of the taxes paid would be used to help low-income people. Speakers did not seem to realize that such aid would be dropped if the tax ever passed Congress.

How is it that the urgency we all shared did not come through in the speeches? Only one mentioned Hurricane Katrina, which is the very real wound



On April 20 protesters in North Carolina agitated against the building of a new coal plant at the Cliffside facility in Rutherford County.

gouged into the world's consciousness—not only as the disasters global warming holds in store but how before and after any disaster the racist, capitalist USA stands ready to sacrifice people based on their skin color, sex or class.

The same dynamic is playing out on a world scale, as seen in three international summits in September. On the one hand, the President of Maldives, an Indian Ocean island nation, movingly appealed to the special climate session of the UN to save his country from disappearing under the rising seas. On the other hand, the two biggest

emitters of greenhouse gases—the U.S. and China—put forward only half-measures falling far short of the reductions scientists say are needed. In the spirit of capitalist competition, the U.S. and China are heading together down a suicidal path rather than let the other gain an economic advantage. China's President Hu even resurrected George W. Bush's scam term "carbon intensity," which Hu promised to reduce by an unspecified amount, that is, emissions will keep growing but not as fast as the economy.

Encouragingly, many protests in the U.S. and other countries raised global warming while the UN met and later as the G-20 summit took place. Many more will happen before and during the climate treaty negotiations to come in Copenhagen in December, as will sit-ins to prevent more coal-fired plants from opening. Still, what is missing is discussion of how deep the social transformation needs to be to break out of capitalism's suicidal path, and how it can come to be. As long as that is missing, our movement will continue to focus on technical solutions, legislation, lobbying and treaties, and will be unable to raise the banner of a truly sustainable society based on new human relations.

—Franklin Dmitryev

'Fracking' in New York

A large number of gas exploration and energy companies are pushing to extract natural gas using hydraulic fracturing—"fracking"—from southern New York State. This involves drilling vertically from 6,000 to 8,000 feet into the earth and then horizontally for up to one mile.

Millions of gallons of water and over 247 chemicals, 90% of which are toxic, are pumped deep into the ground to force natural gas to the surface under pressure. Depending on conditions, 20% to 40% of the toxic mix remains in the ground where it can contaminate the water table, and 60% to 80% is pumped to the surface into pools of toxic sludge that can leach back into the soil and groundwater, common occurrences where fracking is practiced.

Because of a Bush-era exemption in the law, gas exploration companies are not required to disclose the list of chemicals nor their amounts or concentrations.

The affected area includes most of southern New York State, and has already been taking place in much of Pennsylvania, almost all of West Virginia, and most of eastern Ohio, with widespread damage. The Catskill/Delaware watershed is also threatened, which could affect the water supply for New York City.

Most of the plans were made quietly. Now that the state Department of Environmental Conservation has released its Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement, opponents are allowed only 60 days for objections. It is being railroaded through.

There is a growing movement of community groups, citizens, local governments and civic leaders to stop this. Despite the argument by proponents that gas extraction will bring prosperity, damage to the water table can ruin agriculture, seriously contaminate drinking water, and threaten the wine and tourism industries, with the resulting loss of jobs—on top of general environmental destruction and destruction of quality of life.

We are determined and need all the help we can get. To learn more and become involved, here are four websites: www.shaleshock.org; www.ogap.org; www.nyh2o.org; and www.propublica.org. Fracking needs to be stopped NOW or it could lay waste to one of the most beautiful regions of the country. Real people live here and we don't want to be driven from the land and the life we love.

—New York Environmental Activists

Berkeley STRIKE!

Berkeley—The Sept. 24 labor union strike and student/faculty walkout at University of California, Berkeley, reminded many at the noon rally of the campus in the 1960s. Picket lines at every entrance and thousands jamming Sproul Plaza harkened back to another labor/student collaboration, the 1969 Third World Liberation Front Strike. This time workers led the way. In mid-July the ten-campus, 11,000-strong University Professional and Technical Employees (UPTE) union chose to strike on the first day of classes in response to the University's proposed salary decreases and work furloughs, prompted by state budget cuts.

Faculty and students decided to follow suit by calling for a system-wide walkout. Undergrad student fees are scheduled to rise 32% over last year's. UC President Mark Yudof, empowered by the UC Regents to ignore administration/faculty shared governance, has called the \$10,302 tuition "a bargain." One picket sign at Sproul read: "Education Is Not A Commodity."

A concern expressed by several speakers was the accelerating trend towards privatization of public education. That message resonated strongly with students at the rally who had walked out of nearby community colleges. I attended one such school, Laney College in Oakland, when a governing board member advocated toughening entrance requirements in order to matriculate "higher caliber" students.

The massive statewide walkout reflected an urgent sense among workers, professors and students that low-income people are being left behind. It was a call to reject an unacceptable future in which a \$10,000 tuition could one day become a "bargain" at your local community college.

—David M'oto



Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution
by Mario Savio, Eugene Walker,
and Raya Dunayevskaya

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Kraft labor solidarity

Chicago—A group of us held an action Sept. 17 in solidarity with Kraft-Terrabusi workers in Argentina. We raised a banner and passed out flyers to workers leaving the Kraft plant at Kedzie and 73rd. A video was made of solidarity messages from a group of African-American women workers from the plant and Gerry Emmett of News and Letters Committees (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKcm18J2w2g>).

In General Pacheco, Argentina, workers held a series of assemblies in June to demand a pay increase. Because of the H1N1 flu epidemic, on July 3 they picketed to demand better sanitary conditions. Calling the picket a "violent takeover," the company fired 160 workers without severance pay. In response, workers stopped production, occupying the plant for more than five weeks, and blocking the Pan-American Highway six times. At times students and workers set up solidarity roadblocks in Buenos Aires and other cities.

The day after our action here, the company stopped paying the 2,600 workers still employed. Their message was to stop the blockade if they wanted to feed their families. Workers rejected this attempt to divide them. After a Sept. 21 roadblock by 250 workers, the Labor Ministry ordered the company to pay the wages owed.

Kraft declared it would not pay, and called 300 police to storm the factory, shooting tear gas and rubber bullets at occupiers and their supporters rallying outside, including children. They detained 65 people within the factory and wounded four. On Sept. 28 an enormous march was held in Buenos Aires and roadblocks were set up in several provinces in support of the workers. Subway workers held three work stoppages, and protesters tied up traffic in Buenos Aires with roadblocks three days in a row. Rank-and-file workers denounced the heads of the CGT labor federation and the food and beverage workers union, Moyano and Daer respectively, who called the Kraft workers "ultraleftists" and in effect supported the repression.

Solidarity actions have also taken place in Brazil and Colombia, and more will follow in Chicago. We hope the determination of the Kraft-Terrabusi workers will be a rallying point for international solidarity, as well as for the struggle of workers in Argentina to take control of their workplaces—a struggle ongoing since the economic crisis of 2000 sparked occupations, roadblocks, and neighborhood and worker assemblies. There are now dozens of plants under worker control, with ominous maneuvers by the capitalists to use the state's repressive forces to end them.

—Solidarity activist

Healthcare 'reform'

Flint, Mich.—Real objections to the two major healthcare bills before the U.S. Congress are lost in the noise from the right wing about "death panels" and "rationing."

HR 3200, which has three somewhat different versions, and the bill proposed by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, are variations on the same idea: individuals and employers are required to buy health insurance or be penalized if they don't. The major difference is that the Senate plan does not have the "public option" of the House bill which would allow individuals and employers to buy insurance from a government plan. Both have penalties for not buying insurance: 2.5% of adjusted gross income in the House plan, and a flat charge of \$750 to \$1,500 in the Senate.

IN EITHER CASE, paying the penalty does not mean that you have health insurance, only that you would not go to jail. There would still be a substantial number of people not able to afford health insurance but who will be penalized. This could amount to 20 million people according to Healthcare-Now.

A family of four with 35-year-old parents earning \$30,000 per year would be forced onto Medicaid by the Senate bill. For people above the Medicaid level there would be tax credits available, a form of subsidy that would be worthless to an unemployed person. A 35-year-old single person earning \$30,000 per year would have to pay premiums after the tax credit between \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year under either plan.

The 1976 Hyde Amendment has prohibited the use of federal funds for abortion. It is unclear whether abortion would be covered under either plan, since federal funds are not directly involved except through tax credits. Any real healthcare reform would repeal the Hyde Amendment, since more people will be forced onto Medicaid, which does use federal funds. Republican senators are proposing amendments that would require private health plans to cover abortion only as a special rider that would more explicitly prohibit use of federal funds.

THERE IS A REAL need for healthcare reform. The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies calculated in 2002 that 18,000 people die per year in the U.S. from lack of health insurance. The number of uninsured in the U.S. was 46.3 million in 2008. The number of uninsured is growing, in part as a result of the loss of relatively well-paying jobs that provided health insurance.

Proponents of the House plan with the public option, and even proponents of the Senate plan, speak of being "realistic" and "incremental reform." There is nothing realistic about plans that at best cut the number of uninsured only in half and either put people in jail or force them to buy health insurance they cannot afford. There is no reason to think that either plan would lead to a single-payer system. The only immediate reform worthy of the name would be a single-payer system that covered everyone and all medical procedures, including abortion.

—Dan B.

WORLD VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

Labor actions continue across Egypt, including among workers in the textile industry. The largely government-owned textile industry employs about a third of Egypt's industrial labor force. Textile workers are poorly paid, but in the past have had job security to compensate for that. However, in recent years the government has been attempting to privatize the industry, which is labor-intensive and undercapitalized, resulting in job losses, pay cuts and benefit cuts.

Last month workers at Mahalla al-Kubra's Aboul Seba textile factory clashed with security forces when they were prevented from demonstrating against unpaid wages and received notices of 15 days mandatory unpaid holiday leave. The Delta town of Mahalla has been an important center of the Egyptian workers' movement for decades.

Women textile workers have played a vital role in Egypt's labor movement in recent years. Their militancy was described by one union leader at Mahalla's Misr Spinning and Weaving plant this way in 2007: "The women [workers] almost tore apart every representative from the management who came to negotiate. The women were more militant than the men. They were subject to security intimidation and threats, but they held out."

Indeed, that very significant strike, which opened a new era for Egyptian workers, began when 3,000 women workers walked off the job and challenged the male workers to do so as well, chanting "Where are the

men? Here are the women!"

The world and life experiences of Egyptian workers are far removed from President Mubarak's corridors of power, as well as from the religious fantasies of the Muslim Brotherhood. But workers' struggles are making themselves felt. For the first time, in May of this year, the state-controlled General Union of Textile Workers (GUTW) was compelled to recognize a strike by Tanta Flax and Oil Company workers. The government union did this because it recognizes the threat to its existence in the many calls for independent unions in Egypt today.

When the GUTW withdrew support for the strike, workers refused to end it. Rather, workers have now begun to move from strictly economic demands to political criti-

cism of the government itself.

Wildcat strikes have spread in other sectors of the economy as well. So far this year there have been over 200 strike actions. Even government workers have become more militant, with a nationwide strike by property tax collectors and a threatened strike by postal workers. The new, independent tax collectors union is the first independent union formed in Egypt in 50 years.

It must be recognized that some of the most vibrant and significant of today's labor struggles are taking place in the Middle East, whether in Egypt, or among Iraqi oil and government workers and teachers who



Striking workers at Mahalla al-Kubra's Aboul Seba textile factory.

Mohammed Maree

Egyptian textile workers' actions spread

Fundamentalism contested in Aceh

In April parliamentary elections, voters in Aceh rejected hard-line Islamist parties. But the outgoing parliament is using its last days to pass a variety of measures that include requiring women to wear headscarves, possible death by stoning for "adultery," and whipping for premarital sex or homosexual activity. Some current lawmakers declined to endorse these new measures, but none voted against them.

The current governor of Aceh, Irwandi Yusuf, is a former leader of the armed resistance, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). He was elected following the 2005 Memorandum of Understanding with the Indonesian government, which granted Aceh limited autonomy. He has been silent on the proposal, but his government has so far refused to ratify the parliament's legislation.

Aceh is usually claimed to be one of the most religiously conservative regions of Indonesia. But during the freedom struggle, GAM made some exemplary calls for the independence movement to reject the support of reactionary fundamentalist groups. The many women who participated in Aceh's struggle will be unlikely to accept the current proposed legislation. It would be tragic if Aceh fell now to such reactionary tendencies. It is to be hoped that the new parliament will reject such an outcome.

Latin American Notes

Mexico

While the U.S. economy is supposedly in recovery (though unemployment continues to skyrocket), no such recovery can be claimed for Mexico. The economy has been in free-fall, first in relation to the global economic crisis, particularly in the U.S., and second in relation to the swine flu problems of this spring. The economy is expected to decrease by some 7% for the year. Almost half of Mexico's population currently live in conditions of poverty.

There has been a continual increase in numbers of the poor during President Calderon's first three years in office, including an estimated poverty rate of 61% in the countryside.

This economic statistic does not speak concretely enough to the raw reality of widespread poverty and outright misery that affects so many ordinary Mexicans today.

Nor does it speak to the developing resistance:

- An organization has been formed in Mexico City called "Women and Single Mothers Without Housing," who are fighting for a place to live, education, worthwhile projects and self-employment.

- In the state of Tamaulipas, residents of an informal neighborhood, *Mano a Mano* (Hand to Hand), fought to keep their makeshift housing before being expelled with clubs and tear gas by Tampico police, who arrested 200.

South America and the U.S.

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) has voiced opposition to the proposed U.S.-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement which would allow "U.S. access to three Colombian air force bases...two naval bases, and two army installations, and other Colombian military facilities." The stated reason for the bases agreement is to fight drug trafficking. However, the governments of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador openly wonder whether these bases have another purpose: to keep an eye on these countries in terms of their anti-U.S. rhetoric and policies, and to keep in check the rise of Brazil as the dominant economic power of the continent.

The proposed Colombian base agreement comes after the Ecuadorian government of Rafael Correa declined to renew the Manta base pact with the U.S., which had allowed a U.S. military presence in Ecuador. UNASUR was founded in 2005 as a South American political, military, financial, and energy alliance. Its entry into a debate on the U.S.-Colombia military arrangements marks a possible new stage. Not to be forgotten in Latin America-U.S. military relations is the re-establishment of the U.S. Fourth Naval Fleet in 2008, with responsibility in the Caribbean and South America. Its new deployment, in relation to the decade-plus-long rise of progressive social movements and new governments, is taking shape this year.

—Eugene Walker

Neo-fascism in UK

On Sept. 11, anti-fascists and local residents battled members of the neo-fascist English Defense League (EDL) in Harrow, northwest London. The EDL had targeted a new mosque for attack. Similar fighting has broken out in a number of other cities in recent weeks.

While the violent radical Right is again visible, the British National Party (BNP) has taken a different tack. Taking cues from other European neo-fascist groups like the French National Front, Belgian Vlaams Belang, and Austrian Freedom Party, Nick Griffin's BNP has engaged in an effort at "re-branding" itself.

The "new" BNP will "...use the saleable words: freedom, security, identity, democracy. Nobody can criticize them." It means downplaying traditional themes of anti-Semitism and racism in favor of a more fashionable prejudice against Muslims, and the non-existent "Islamification of Britain."

The cosmetic change has paid off in that the BNP has succeeded in winning two seats in the European Parliament along with 55 local offices. Other groups, like the EDL and Combat 18, have moved to fill the thug vacuum with attacks on immigrants, Muslims, Roma and Irish Republicans.

These British and European neo-fascists have found allies in the U.S., who also represent different strategies but the same racist ends, from David Duke to Patrick Buchanan.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. *News & Letters* was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910–1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the

National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907–83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject what is, but

to reveal and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and

her final 1987 Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and donated new supplementary volumes to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

In opposing this capitalistic, racist, sexist, heterosexist, class-ridden society, we have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead." We participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our *Constitution* states: "It is our aim...to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking. Send for a copy of the *Constitution* of News and Letters Committees.

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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\$1

WORKSHOPTALKS

Scapegoating cheaper than healing

By Htun Lin

Recently my shop was abuzz with discussions about the rape of a teenage girl at a high school dance in Richmond where I live. What bothered my peers was that 24 kids looked on without helping the 15-year-old while she was being gang-raped. We all agreed that this behavior is depraved.

Then I asked, where do you think these children learned to behave this way? They learn in this society that each one sinks or swims on their own. Our kids learn how to survive in a harsh cold world that they did not create, and that doesn't care where they end up.

It made me think how, even at the Kaiser HMO hospital where we work, management fosters a similar attitude in the workplace. A hospital is about collectively caring for others, but it has bureaucratic procedures for abandoning someone when they are down and most in need of help.

A patient who was a Kaiser member for 25 years lost her job in 2008. When, after exhausting COBRA coverage, she applied for a Kaiser individual plan, they rejected her because she had had breast cancer in 2004. She was shocked at this betrayal. She loved her caregivers who had cured her.

Kaiser just sent her a computer-generated form letter with a long list of pre-existing conditions that trigger rejection with the explanation that their "medical underwriting screening process" is how they remain "cost-effective." She then appealed with a letter from

continued on p. 3

BLACK/REDVIEW

by John Alan

'I want justice'

John Alan's column is turned over this issue to excerpts of Larry Marshall's remarks to a Chicago Local meeting of News and Letters Committees on Oct. 26.

On April 3, 2001, at about 3:30 p.m., my 11-year-old granddaughter was sent to the store. She never made it three houses past her house. Three white officers called her to their unmarked car. She had just turned the corner and she thought, I better get back to the house. One officer jumped out of the car and chased her across the street. When she realized she was running the wrong way and came back, the driver decided to run over her. He just missed her. Then she stumbled and they grabbed her, beat her, and put her in a choke lock.

RACISM IN CHICAGO

By that time all the community—I thank God for my neighbors—came out and were asking, what do you all think you're doing to this girl? The officers had some drugs in their hands and the idea was to put these drugs on the girl and make her a drug dealer girl. But they couldn't get the drugs on her and they took off. That's the point when I became really angry. At my age I've seen some of the worst discrimination that you could ever witness. Living in a town where you have to go in the back door and a white person will sell you a hamburger and give it to you through a window.

I picked up the phone and knew I was going to say something really bad to the commander. When I found

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Permanent unemployment, capitalism's hallmark

by Ron Kelch

The Nov. 6 announcement of a dramatic surge in U.S. unemployment to 10.2%—really 17% counting discouraged workers—brought home that, far from an ordinary downturn, the economy has sunk into a deep structural morass. A year ago the dreaded worst-case scenario, projected to garner support for President Obama's stimulus plan, was that without a stimulus unemployment would peak by now at an unconscionable 9%. Today's revelation of the depth of misery in the real economy contrasts sharply with the financial market's renewed exuberance over a reported third quarter growth rate of 3.4% and an officially declared end to the Great Recession.

New "growth" in the economy has come not from investment but from stimulus spending and increased productivity as companies force remaining workers to work harder. The "growing" economy lost 190,000 jobs in October. Every day there are 6,600 new foreclosure evictions in the U.S. In many places foreclosure rates are not slowing but accelerating. In Orange County, California, September's foreclosures were up 5% over August and 90% from a year ago.

There are now 19 million vacant housing units and 3.5 million homeless people, of whom 1,350,000 are children. Tent cities are sprouting up across the country. Each night 350 people are turned away at St. John's Shelter for Women and Children in Sacramento, California whose growing tent city has attracted national media attention.¹ There are now 36 million



On Oct. 27 over 5,000 protesters marched in Chicago against the American Bankers Association's annual meeting (see article p. 10)

Americans on food stamps, 10 million added over the past two years. The Department of Agriculture reports that hunger stalks over a million children, and in 17 million households, encompassing 49 million people, food periodically runs short in this richest country in the world. In Elkhart County, Indiana, suicides went from an annual average of 16 to 22 already this year. In many areas of severe unemployment, suicide rates due to economic distress are comparable to the time of the Great Depression.

BIGGER TOO-BIG-TO-FAIL

The lords of finance, who brought the system down and precipitated this crisis, are indeed a minuscule minority. The same investment banks—minus one after the collapse of Lehman Brothers—are now even bigger too-big-to-fail. They are on top again, making record profits, dishing out record bonuses, and inflating a new bubble with the same kind of speculative instruments that caused

the financial collapse. Since they were rescued, bailed-out banks spent \$70 million lobbying Congress, which dutifully forced accountants to weaken standards put in place after the Enron scandal, so that these banks could hide their toxic assets.

What can't be hidden is the naked truth of this totally inverted world, which is causing consternation among the great majority who work in the real economy. The political system will do anything and everything to preserve finance capital as an alien power over workers' real-life human activity that constitutes social production.

Incredulity and a boiling outrage continue over the no-holds-barred effort to save the system of finance

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An announcement and an invitation

This is an announcement and an invitation to participate in a celebration of the life and work of Raya Dunayevskaya during the 2010 centenary of her birth. It will continue throughout the year ahead, in the pages of *News & Letters*, and in a number of special events to mark the rich legacy of the body of ideas she founded as the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism.

Far from any look backward, this celebration looks to the future. It will be what Dunayevskaya called and practiced throughout her life: a "Retrospective as Perspective." We aim to explore the meaning of Marxist-Humanism for the 21st century, in particular the concrete problems we are confronting today in the struggle for a new world to be built on human foundations.

That discussion was never more needed than when the continued existence of capitalism has been openly questioned by theoreticians and workers alike—leading to significant calls to return to Marx, not only from the Left but from bourgeois economists as well. The burning questions, however, to be answered are: "What kind of return?" and "Which Marx?"

To work out these questions for today and tomorrow, we want to explore the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism. It began through the creation of the theory of state-capitalism and the Johnson-Forest Tendency in the 1940s. Without state-capitalist theory the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism could not have been born in 1953, when Dunayevskaya broke through on the Hegelian Dialectic and initiated a new kind of revolutionary organization. Adrienne Rich described Dunayevskaya as "living the revolution," a phrase that describes her political-philosophic-organizational developments unseparated from her vital activities with the movements from below. It included everything from the Black struggles in the midst of World War II, to her participation in the first ever miners' general strike against Au-

tomation after World War II, and her focus on women's struggles as Reason throughout history. Her voluminous correspondence with philosophers and activists in all the revolutionary developments of her lifetime is another of her activities of "thinking and doing" which defined her life.

During this centenary year, we plan to complete a collection of Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on Marx, from the 1940s to the 1980s, that will make explicit a methodology with which today's revolutionaries can confront new objective-subjective developments.

Finding answers to today's questions in our exploration and development of Dunayevskaya's work does not mean the objective situation has not changed or that we do not face new challenges. It means grasping the methodology by which Marxist-Humanism was developed as the needed philosophy of revolution for our age, in order to develop it all the way to a new society.

It is why we want to turn over space in *News & Letters* through the year ahead to print and hear your thoughts on the way Raya Dunayevskaya's work speaks to your life: to hear not only from those who met or corresponded with her during her life, but as well from those who met Marxist-Humanism later. We hope to hear from workers and intellectuals, students, women, and prisoners, who have been influenced by her philosophy in their own work and lives.

At the same time, we are looking forward to special meetings that are being planned to continue a dialogue with Marxist-Humanism in this centenary year. Already in the works is a public meeting in Detroit, Michigan, at the Wayne State University Archives Library, where her archives are housed and are open to all to study. Mike Smith, the Director of the Archives Library, will give the keynote address. All are welcome to attend and participate in the discussion.

WOMAN AS REASON

By Terry Moon

About 1,600 people, mostly women, participated in the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) Conference in Atlanta, with over 360 workshops, papers and poster presentations. This year's theme was "Difficult Dialogues," with keynote speaker Angela Davis.

NWSA, never a static organization, continues to evolve. Remarkable about this year is that the organization's decades-long struggle to become a genuinely multi-racial organization seems to have made significant progress. NWSA's president is now Beverly Guy-Sheftall, who has done more than anyone to build and bring into being Black feminist scholarship and Black women's history and archives. Further, the conference brought together Black, Brown, and white U.S. women with women from Haiti to South Africa, and from Morocco to Poland. Many workshops were an exciting mix of women from all over the world with differing opinions and experiences (see article below).

Given this remarkable turnaround for an organization that started off very white and almost self-destructed over the issue of racism, it was disappointing to see, despite its remarkable membership, that the slide away from explicit discussion of revolutionary theory and philosophy continues. (See "Need to dig into revolutionary theory," Aug.-Sept. 2007 *N&L*, and "Theory/Class Debates at NWSA," June-July 2008 *N&L*.)

DISCUSSIONS OF PHILOSOPHY MISSING

This was foreshadowed in Davis' keynote speech which touched on many different topics of concern—such as racism, classism, homophobia, the production of knowledge for the movement, and the difficulty of moving freedom forward. Yet it came off more as a congratulatory talk about how far the women's movement and NWSA in particular have come. And while it had plenty of points that women would reference throughout the conference, they were nothing new, for example, how often the category of "woman" does not include all women

NWSA Experiences

An unprecedented number of sessions at the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) Conference took up "intersectionality" and women of color. While approaches varied from religious veneration of "foremothers" like Audré Lorde to dialoguing between "the academy and the streets," to a recognition that "activism without dialogue cannot sustain us," women's passion to be multi-dimensional was unmistakable.

One presenter saw Black feminism as an alternative to the "either/or" gender categories reflected in hip-hop culture, and stressed that Black feminist musicians Erykah Badu, Goapele, India.Arie and Jill Scott all are linked to organizations which assist young Black women. But another, rather than developing the revolutionary social implications of Audré Lorde's writing, saw it leading to spiritual practice.

In contrast, Layali Eshqaidef explored how Muslim youth use social networking technologies to change the discourse: blogging as a social movement. In 2007 Egyptian women came together via their blogs to write about the same thing on a given day: "We are All Laila." Between Dec. 24-30 they are expanding this to the whole Arab world. Eshqaidef said the movement is calling for social justice and is anti-war, anti-capitalism and against patriarchy, is non-violent, inclusive, for democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Directors of Women's Studies programs "who are still committed to the liberatory work that brought us to feminism from different racial, ethnic and class locations" conducted a powerful session to share ways they "sustain this vision." Dr. Becky Thompson said we need to think about the radicalism that informed women's studies and use guerilla strategies to diversify our programs. She used "indigenous methods" to search for and hire a Native American professor, overcoming the mantra that there are no qualified candidates.

Dr. Diane Harriford related that her white, upper-middle-class students read Black feminist texts as something happening to others. She is developing methods to overcome that alienation.

Dr. Ruth Zambrana spoke of the relationship between Latina feminism and Black feminist thought and their needed collaboration. Latinas and Latina feminism are extremely heterogeneous; it is time to move beyond *Borderlands* (a groundbreaking book by Gloria Anzaldúa). Dr. Kesho Scott insisted, "Don't do any more diversity work unless it's about power-sharing!"

Several visitors to the News and Letters Committees literature table were glad of a Marxist presence, especially one that made explicit Marx's feminist dimension. Many women of color wanted to share the difficult dialogues that brought them there and to continue to develop them in a quest to end artificial borders and the limits of academia.

—Susan Van Gelder

NWSA's evolution

and hides women's specificity rather than revealing it. What surprised me about Davis' talk was how devoid it was of theory and philosophy. While she mentioned she was a Marxist, and had studied German philosophy in 1969 including Hegel's "master and slave relation," those references had more the feel of name-dropping rather than anything substantive.

CATEGORIES AND THE MOVEMENT

Her anti-dialectical approach was evident when she spoke of "categories," a concept very important in theoretical work. She said that categories always fall short of the movement and that's one reason we have to change our language. Her point was that if we look at the category of freedom, we have to go very far to say we've shifted freedom's terrain.

But counterposing the creation of a category to the movement short-changes both. While the movement from below brings into the world and makes concrete the Idea that freedom also has to mean women's freedom, philosophy, by creating categories of what comes from the movement, connects the present with the past and the future so that the Idea can have a lasting impact. It is not only the self-emancipatory movement but the self-determination of the Idea that is needed to create a new human foundation for society.

As always, we did meet many women who were working towards the liberation of society. For example, participants in a workshop on AIDS prevention programs concluded that to end the AIDS epidemic it would take a whole new society, not just promoting the use of condoms. Yet explicit discussions of philosophy, and Marxism in particular, were missing.

Several sessions took up that the faltering economy means that women's studies' very existence is threatened. Unfortunately, most were during the day on Thursday, the day with the fewest participants, and didn't penetrate the self-congratulatory atmosphere that appeared to pervade much of the conference. And it seemed fantastic in a world where the ever more obvious failings of capitalism are prompting many, even including some in the bourgeoisie, to take another look at Marx, that Marx's name was not mentioned in any of the 360 presentation titles except ours.

Despite the ever present problems, many important things happened at NWSA, including the book launch and the conversation with the editors of a new anthology, *Still Brave: Legendary Black Women on Race and Gender* and *I am Your Sister: Collected and Unpublished Writings of Audré Lorde*. It let us know how far we have come, while so much of the conference showed us how far we still have to go.

Down with Stupak/Pitts amendment!

Memphis, Tenn.—On Oct. 7, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Affordable Health Care for America Act with the addition of the Stupak/Pitts amendment, which prohibits the use of federal funds "to pay for any abortion or to cover any part of the costs of any health plan that includes coverage of abortion." This means that if the insurance company receives federal funds, a woman cannot buy insurance that covers abortion (which is currently covered by 85% of all insurance plans) even with her own money. Even if she has insurance that currently covers abortion, she will lose that abortion coverage if the insurance company makes the decision to receive federal funds.

As always, the majority who will be harmed are poor women who will not be able to pay for abortions out of pocket. Waiting to come up with the money will lead to more abortions performed later in pregnancy when it is more dangerous for the woman.

This amendment has no requirement for insurance plans to cover birth control or the components of a reproductive health exam such as sexually transmitted infection counseling, domestic violence counseling, pelvic exams or pap tests. Plans are also not required to cover maternity or newborn care, pediatric dental and vision services, or substance abuse counseling.

Loretta Ross, National Coordinator of Sistersong Reproductive Health Collective, stated, "Health care is not an option, not a privilege but a human right," and the Stupak/Pitts amendment legislates "a loss and injury to the human rights of women."

The religious right is celebrating the amendment as a potential "nail in the eventual coffin" of *Roe v. Wade*. The religious right has been grooming its followers to become political leaders who follow their ideology instead of listening to their constituents.

On the day the House voted on the amendment, Sistersong rallied hundreds of protesters in Washington, D.C., 70% of whom made advocacy visits to their representatives. Many are considering another March for Women's Lives in Washington D.C. like the one in 2004 in which over a million demonstrated.

—Adele



After 8 years of war

San Francisco—Over a 100 people crowded into a room to hear Zoya, a representative of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), on Oct. 25. We here print excerpts of her talk.

...Afghanistan is now a free country: free for the rapists of women and children, free for the warlords, for drug lords, terrorists and occupation forces. It is not free for the people of Afghanistan. There is an Afghanistan not seen in the image presented in the U.S. news. There is resistance to the bitter realities created by the war; there are human rights organizations and others trying to help.

In the last eight years, billions of dollars poured into our country. Most of it was for the foreign troops. Obama is now considering whether to increase them. What is their objective? Why are they here?

In 2001 the justifications were: first, to liberate the women of Afghanistan... Women are oppressed by their families. Domestic violence is related to the political situation. For example, when a young girl was raped by a member of Parliament, there was no justice for her... President Karzai pardoned rapists of yet another girl because they were connected to warlords... Schools are supposedly open, but on their way to school girls have acid thrown in their faces, or are abducted, raped and/or forced to marry warlords' soldiers or the Taliban.

The second justification for the 2001 invasion was to bring democracy to Afghanistan. But today Afghanistan is a mafia narco-state and the world capital of opium... The recent election was a sham from the beginning. Karzai and Abdullah are the same donkey but with a different saddle... RAWA, because we believe in democracy, is against both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. We cannot work openly in Afghanistan, and still struggle semi-underground...

The third justification was to fight terrorism. Yet the Taliban is getting stronger, mostly because of U.S. policies. Afghans had high hopes eight years ago for peace and security. But U.S. support for the Northern Alliance crushed that hope...

More troops are not a solution for Afghanistan, they mean more civilian deaths, that's all... The U.S. should not only withdraw their troops, they should disarm the private armies, disempower the warlords and all fundamentalists they have been supporting in the past three decades... After eight years of U.S. presence, the terrorists are more powerful in Afghanistan and the region than they were in 2001 and the Taliban are present in 80% of Afghanistan and kill civilians through their suicide bombings.

The people's power and the anti-war movement in the U.S. needs to be stronger, more active. You should expose the real nature of this war and put pressure on your government. We need your solidarity, your human, financial and political solidarity.

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Right-wing militants in Somalia are rounding up and whipping women who are not wearing veils or socks. More than 130 people were detained in three days for "violating" sharia law. Women have also been flogged for wearing bras, and forced to remove their bras and "bare their breasts."

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has ruled that Belmont Abbey Catholic College in Belmont, N.C., discriminated against its employees on the basis of sex by denying them healthcare coverage for oral contraceptives. In 2007, the college stopped its insurance coverage of oral contraceptives, voluntary sterilization and abortion.

A nearly \$500,000 judgment awarded to a Library of Congress employee, who lost that job while undergoing a gender change from a man to a woman, will stand and not be challenged by the Obama administration. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit on her behalf in 2005 and two months ago a federal judge gave her back pay and damages because of sex discrimination. She said she saw support of the judgment as recognition that transgender discrimination must end.

Stroger Hospital employees fight cuts

Chicago—The Cook County Health and Hospitals Board is dismantling the public health system. This drastic move is an effort to rid the County of its traditional role as healthcare provider, disguised as a response to its budget crisis.

The Board plans to close all inpatient care at Oak Forest and Provident Hospitals, leaving Stroger Hospital, which is already overcrowded and understaffed, to pick up the slack. At the same time, they have begun to lay off Stroger Hospital's physicians, nurses, social workers and others, with hundreds more layoffs promised. The neonatal and pediatric units at Stroger are scheduled to be permanently closed, as are several outpatient services and clinics.

The supposed mission of the County hospitals and clinics is to provide care to the poor and uninsured regardless of their ability to pay. This principle has been whittled away for years, but it remains a safety net.

We provide care for patients with extremely high rates of unemployment, homelessness, substance abuse, mental illness and histories of incarceration. The vast majority are Black. It is the only place where undocumented immigrants or immigrants not eligible for benefits—because they have not been legal permanent residents for five years—can receive healthcare.

The Board's plan demonstrates that the people served are not considered worthy of life. The workers, who are majority Black, are equally disregarded. In fact, the County hired an army of consultants at over \$10 million to spy on the workers and make "scientific" recommendations for cuts. They have also spent millions on contractors to replace us.

William Foley, the new CEO, held two "town hall" meetings for Stroger employees to outline the strategic plan for "restructuring." He made the arrogant mistake of scheduling these meetings the day after the first pink slips went out. Workers denounced the plan and defended their integrity and the dignity of the patients.

One woman asked why her department was being forced to train their own replacements—the contrac-

tors. She insisted that the workers are the experts, not the consultants who recommended hiring the contractors. She called for the workers to play the lead role in the decision-making regarding any restructuring and to be able to keep their jobs.

Most workers are unionized, but they're in three different unions that have not worked together. SEIU Local 73 called for a demonstration outside of Stroger Hospital on Nov. 4. The nurses' union, NNOC, refused to take part. It actually scheduled a membership meeting for the same time, thereby preventing the nurses from participating. AFSCME was absent too. The rally was small, although patients walking past joined in.

The three unions appear to be more interested in protecting their own turf than in working together to protect public healthcare and thereby the workers' jobs and dignity. Why should we cede our voices to the union? Why should they determine the level of solidarity we have with each other? At the rally, I felt as silenced by the unions as I do by the Board and CEO. But many workers felt it was better than doing nothing.

—Stroger Hospital worker

Mexico: mass strikes for fired workers



Mexico City—More than 100,000 trade unionists, students and civil society activists streamed into Mexico City to the central Zócalo as part of a national civic work stoppage on Nov. 11 in support of 40,000 electrical workers who President Calderón had summarily fired a month ago while dissolving the state-owned light and power company (*Luz y Fuerza del Centro*).

The marches were the culmination of a one-day partial strike of union workers, including the telephone workers, as well as workers, professors and students from the major public universities. Workers and students demonstrated in front of buildings of *Luz y Fuerza* that Calderón's federal police had been occupying.

In the days prior to this mass mobilization, electrical workers had been holding demonstrations in front of the Congress and the Supreme Court and at the union headquarters. They had sought solidarity with other unions and had appealed directly to student activists at the public universities.

I was at the Economics Faculty at the giant

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Wal-Mart fake smiles

Where would unions be today if they failed to organize GM with the great sit-down strikes in the 1930s? We as workers must begin to ask, why haven't the big unions taken on Wal-Mart? We the workers should be in direct action with the unorganized and show them how to sit down. If the union leadership has lost the will to organize, then the unions are on the road to death.

Workers themselves must stop the money from flowing throughout all Wal-Marts by just not working. Our work is the only real power we the workers have. We must take back our real value, which is labor itself.

At my local Wal-Mart store a young Black woman cleaning the restrooms had a big smile on her face. My first thought was, she must be really happy. I asked her, "How do you like working here?" She said, "I hate it here. Why do you ask me something like that?" She began looking to see who was around "We all hate our jobs here. I can get fired for talking like this."

I told her, "I have had a lot of jobs that I learned to hate too!" Then she really began to talk. "They don't want us to talk with people. Around here, it's keep a damn smile on your face and do your job. A person that doesn't smile they will find a reason to let go. They even make us sing their damn Wal-Mart song every day!"

On her break outside, I asked her, "Do you think a union will help?" "Hell no," she said, "All they will do is take more money out of my check. The union was okay for my grandpa, he was in the Steelworkers Union for all of his life. Everybody else I know that was in a union has lost their job one way or another."

The young workers I have talked with know that their dreams will never happen within this worldwide capitalist system. When the workers themselves take back their labor at the point of production, then and only then, will we see a system set up by us, the workers. Then we will really smile, for we will be free.

—Martin

Ford workers reject concessions

Detroit—Rank-and-file Ford auto workers overwhelmingly rejected contract concessions proposed by UAW President Ron Gettelfinger and his bureaucracy. More than 70% of production workers and 75% of skilled trades workers voted against proposed concessions.

They included a six-year wage freeze on entry-level employees (\$14 an hour, compared with \$27 an hour before recent concessions) and binding arbitration (no strikes allowed) on disputes over wages and benefits that may arise in the next 2011 contract. Many skilled trades job classifications would have been consolidated, which simply means work speed-up.

In an August conference the Ford UAW national council delegates, mostly local union presidents, had rejected any idea of opening contract talks to consider concessions. The UAW bureaucracy then pulled a language trick, declaring that they weren't reopening the contract, just seeking contract "modifications."

The UAW bureaucracy, Ford and the national media tried to persuade workers by claiming that Ford had to have concessions to remain competitive with GM and Chrysler, with concessions gained through government-orchestrated bankruptcy. In return, Ford offered a \$1,000 signing bonus to each of its 41,000 UAW workers, new investments in plants and new jobs and job protection for as many as 7,000 positions.

The Ford workers knew that on the production line more concessions would add to the miseries of the previous March concessions. They knew that Ford had been long on promises but had failed to deliver. They did the simple math, and knew that if Ford was willing to pay \$41 million in bonus money, the concessions would be worth billions, all taken out of their hides.

Under the impact of record unemployment, especially in the auto industry, everybody just knew that Ford workers would approve the concessions—everybody except the Ford workers themselves.

Ford workers at the Kansas City assembly plant, in one of the largest locals with 3,737 members, voted 92% against concessions and voted to authorize a strike. That doesn't mean the workers will necessarily strike, but it shows their anger.

They have filed a huge number of grievances against the company, and disciplinary actions are ruthlessly punishing the workers. This is just the tip of the iceberg. With the kinds of concessions that have been forced on all of the auto workers, GM and Chrysler as well as Ford, the anger and resentment are certain to increase and erupt throughout the industry.

—Andy Phillips

Young girls fed to China's sweatshops

Leslie T. Chang, a former foreign correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*, writes in a highly readable book, *Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China* (Random House, 2008), of her experience in the factory town of Dongguan, China. Ms. Chang lived a decade in Dongguan, following the lives of two 16-year-old factory girls who worked in a tennis shoe factory, migrating there from the countryside. They are part of the biggest migration of peoples into an urban area in history—an estimated 130 million.

Hundreds of factories dot Dongguan. Entrepreneurs exploit the labor power of girls, some as young as 14. Working conditions are terrible, with young women often working around the clock for low pay that keeps them in a life of misery.

Chang follows the lives of two factory girls. Her theme is the fast-moving pace of China's industrialization and its effects on these individuals. It is young women who are the backbone of producing goods that have become the inexpensive consumer products of the world.

What makes this story unique is that it singles out great changes occurring in individuals who are in the midst of China's "industrial revolution."

Chang, who knows the language, lived alongside the girls and read the diary of one, and was able to give an insightful human feeling to their lives. Perhaps the biggest change the girls underwent was their feeling of independence and ability to better their economic standing by hard work.

To better themselves they had to utilize their feminine wiles and be able to meet challenges with confidence, even if it meant a false confidence. Along with a better materialistic life, the girls lost a lot of traditional qualities their families held dear back on the farm.

Chang brought into this migration tale from the farm to the factory a parallel story of her own family's migration to the U.S. She saw the same work ethic in her parents that she sees in the factory girls.

Factory Girls is an enlightening look at working girls in China. It is a humanistic look at their living conditions, their hopes and dreams, and their striving to achieve a better life in the midst of the fast changing economic conditions of China.

—Nobu

WORKSHOPTALKS

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FROM THE WRITINGS OF

RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: On the occasion of the death of Claude Lévi-Strauss, we present excerpts of Dunayevskaya's "Letter to the Youth on the Needed Total Uprooting of the Old and the Creation of New Human Relations." The original, dated Aug. 13, 1983, can be found in The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, #7803.

Because of my deep confidence in the youth striving to be "thought-divers" (whether or not they are superb swimmers just by being young and strong), I'd like to appeal to you to dive into the battle of challenging post-Marx Marxism. That battle will reveal the much greater maturity of this historic period as against that of the generation of the 1960s. It is true that they were so massively active in that decade that 1968 had reached the threshold of a revolution. The fact, however, that it remained an unfinished act made it clear to the following generation that they had better probe deeply into how the lack of serious theory vitiated activism's goals. The idea that activity, activity, activity would absolve them from the hard labor of recreating Marx's theory of "revolution in permanence" for their age and that theory picked up "en route" would solve the totality of the economic-political-social crises, as well as end U.S. imperialism's war in Vietnam, ended in total failure.

Nevertheless, one of the most famous debates in that period was that between Jean-Paul Sartre and Claude Lévi-Strauss (...accepted as gurus by the youth movement), as the 1960s generation continued to follow new philosophies like Existentialism and Structuralism, instead of trying to find the historic link of continuity with "old" Marxism. While Lévi-Strauss critiqued Sartre's adherence to dialectics, holding that Structuralism required the analytic, empiric, scientific method, Sartre—since he, himself, was enamored with Structuralism and had as ahistorical an outlook as Lévi-Strauss—could hardly win the argument for meaning as against Lévi-Strauss's emphasis on non-meaning. Here is how Lévi-Strauss put it:

*"In my perspective, meaning is never the primary phenomenon; meaning is always reducible. In other words, behind all meaning there is a non-meaning, while the reverse is not the case. As far as I'm concerned, significance is always phenomenal."*¹

A profound critique of Lévi-Strauss' Structuralism came, not from Existentialism, but from an independent Marxist anthropologist-dialectician, Stanley Diamond:

*"The ethnologist is actually saying that he is not interested in meaning (significance), which he regards as merely (and always) phenomenal. For him, the primary phenomenon is not meaning, but the non-meaning which lies behind meaning and to which, he believes, meaning is reducible."*²

THE POINT IS THAT the lifeblood of the Hegelian dialectic—when it is not diluted by Existentialism but seen in its essence as a ceaseless movement of becoming, disclosing the meaning of history—is exactly what saved Hegel from the Kantian, impenetrable "Thing-in-itself" and its absolute idealism. Though Hegel may have wanted to confine history to history of thought, the single dialectic which characterizes both objectivity and subjectivity moved Hegel to objective idealism. That single dialectic became the ground for Marx's dialectic of revolution.

It was this, **just this**, which led proletarians to accept dialectical development, not alone for its "dynamism" but for its meaning in historic confrontation. Contrast the non-Marxist, intellectualistic, abstract approach to dialectics with that of a Marxist-Humanist proletarian attitude—and consider that it was precisely on the question of phenomenology. That does not mean phenomenal but the science of phenomena, of experience. I am referring to Charles Denby, the editor of *News & Letters* and his favorite quotation from Hegel:

*"Enlightenment upsets the household arrangements, which spirit carries out in the house of faith, by bringing in the goods and furnishings belonging to the world of the Here and Now."*³

The whole point of Denby's interest in the Hegelian quotation was this: What does philosophy have to say on the relationship between reality and revolution? It was because he saw Hegel introducing reality into the critique of the Enlightenment that Denby's attraction to Hegelian dialectics deepened. He could then see that dialectical development signified the **transformation** of reality....

Please remember, dear Youth, as I appeal to you to engage in this battle of ideas, that it is not only the post-Marx Marxists we challenge but **all** alternatives to **Marx's** Marxism. *Philosophy and Revolution* critiqued not only revolutionaries like Mao and Trotsky,

1. Claude Lévi-Strauss, "A Confrontation," *New Left Review* no. 62 (July-August 1970, orig. French edition 1963), p. 64.

2. See "Anthropology in Question" in Section 6, "The Root Is Man: Critical Traditions," of *Reinventing Anthropology*, edited by Dell Hymes (Vintage Books, 1972), p. 427.—RD

3. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind* (New York: Harper, 1967), p. 512.

Letter to the Youth

Lévi-Strauss and the battle of ideas

but also Sartre, the "Outsider Looking In." It is true that I deal with him there as Existentialist and I deal with the structuralist Communist intellectual guru, Louis Althusser, all too briefly, very nearly dismissing him in a few footnotes. I do not mention Lévi-Strauss at all. Nevertheless, they represent the very same subject—Alternatives—that I began this letter with. Later I will contrast that to a true re-creation of Marxism for one's age. For us that began in 1953 with the breakthrough on the Absolute Idea. It will be easier, I believe, to dig deep into that if we look first at what we are familiar with—the Youth Revolt in this country, the Free Speech Movement burdened by American pragmatism.⁴ Revolutionaries though they were, they certainly resisted philosophy of revolution. Though they had asked me to address them on Marx's Humanism, the interest was more on the subject of alienation than on philosophy of revolution.

IT WAS ALL MOST EXCITING when Mario Savio was released from jail at midnight and arrived at 2 a.m. in a spot several miles outside of Berkeley to hear me speak on Marx's Humanism. Though they were very interested in Humanism, and, indeed, related it to their own new lifestyles, Mario was the next day also going to meet Aptheker, because he had promised Bettina, who was also part of the Free Speech Movement, and he was open to "all ideas" and was not the least bit interested in any Party or organization. In a word, the supposedly non-partyist, non-elitist, non-organizational person who was only for activism, activism, activism, did not see the contradiction in organizational form that lacked a philosophy of freedom and that form that was inseparable from a struggle for freedom, for revolution.

Permit me here to go back to 1953 to reexamine the process of working out, or seeing the emergence of, a new philosophic dimension. It is the year I first broke through on the Absolute Idea, removing its abstract, mystical veil and seeing it as not only a unity of theory and practice, but a totally new relationship of the two **because** a new historic beginning had been reached with this live movement **from practice**. This was the period we completely rejected both the designation of the youth as "the beat generation" and the pragmatic view of the epoch itself as "an end of ideology."

THE BREAKTHROUGH ON the Absolute Idea helped us to perceive a new generation of revolutionaries in that so-called "beat generation" who were rejecting a world they never made; and to see in the revolts in Latin America and Africa the emergence of a Third World. Indeed, toward the end of the 1950s, retrogression and McCarthyism in the U.S. notwithstanding, we declared it to be a totally new epoch: in production; in political freedom battles, whether that be the new

4. See *The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution*, by Mario Savio, Raya Dunayevskaya, and Eugene Walker (Detroit: News and Letters, 1965). Philosophically, the Black dimension, especially Frantz Fanon, far from being pragmatist, worked out its critique of Hegel's concept of reciprocity in a revolutionary-dialectical manner. See both *Black Skin, White Masks* and my "Revolutions and Philosophies" of Aug. 1, 1983 [*Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, #7819].—RD

5. Dunayevskaya's speech on Marx's theory of alienation, given in Berkeley at the height of the Free Speech Movement and titled "Marx's Debt to Hegel," can be found in *The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution*.

6. Bettina Aptheker's father Herbert Aptheker was a leader of the Communist Party USA.

7. Daniel Bell's *The End of Ideology* was published in 1960.

8. See the News and Letters Committees pamphlet *Workers Battle Automation* by Charles Denby.

Black dimension in the Montgomery Bus Boycott or in the East European Freedom Fighters against Russian state-capitalism calling itself Communism; a new stage of cognition as the Hungarian Revolution highlighted it by bringing Marx's Humanist Essays onto the historic stage. The breakthrough on the Absolute Idea was not only on the **movements** from practice and from theory but also on ORGANIZATION, as we held that its dialectic would illuminate also the dialectic of the Party, as we had long since rejected "the party to lead" concept. We were here driven to go also to Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, and there, as we approached the three final syllogisms in Absolute Mind and trod on ground none had ever walked before, we felt that in place of a "dialectic of the party" we were, with Hegel's Self-Thinking Idea, with the masses' Self-Bringing Forth of Liberty, face to face with a new society. After all, Marx had unchained the dialectic as he had recreated the Absolute Method as a "revolution in permanence."...

IN THE MID-1970s we finally got to know Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* which let us hear him think. By not being a work finished for the press, it compels us to work out, to labor at what Marx has only in notes. This is what we must all work at for our age. Here is why we so urgently need a new type of member and need to see ourselves as a new type of member, to continue the development of what *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, in completing the trilogy of revolution, has begun. In the process, let us not forget what that great revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg, did for us, not only in letting us discover her unknown feminist dimension, but in posing the question of the relationship of spontaneity to organization so insightfully that, though she had not worked out the answers, she helped create an atmosphere that makes it impossible any longer to ignore all the ramifications of spontaneity.

Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program*, when reread with the totality of Marx's Marxism—where we found the "new moments" Marx experienced on what we now call the Third World and the new forces of revolution as Reason, be it Women's Liberation, Black or youth—demanded a reexamination of all the great revolutionaries, especially Lenin and Luxemburg, who seemed to be so deeply divided on the question of organization. It was that reexamination in this year of the Marx centenary, in this nuclear world, in the imperative nature of the challenge to post-Marx Marxists, which would not let revolutionaries off scot-free of the organizational question.

The youth need also to dig into the first chapter of Part III of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* to grapple with the Promethean vision of the young Marx before he was a Marxist, when he was still a Prometheus Bound, when he was still a young Hegelian (1839-41) just filling in some minor gaps in Hegel's monumental *History of Philosophy*—and asking himself that imperative question: "where to begin?" When we talk about "thought-divers" we can see that Marx was the greatest of all.

That's what I'm really appealing to the youth to do. Becoming a thought-diver and an activist in this period demands nothing short of **practicing** the challenge to all post-Marx Marxists, and thereby creating such new ground for organization, such concretization of Marx's revolution in permanence, as to find a new way to let the actual revolution **be**.

Anthropology and Marx's philosophy of revolution

Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution

With his study of works on primitive societies, Marx was diving into the study of human development, both in different historic periods and in the most basic Man/Woman relationship. The concept he held fast was the one he had worked out in his 1844 *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*. This was not, as anthropologists would have it, simply a move from a philosophic to an empiric, scientific, and anthropological view. Rather, as a revolutionary, Marx's hostility to capitalism's colonialism was intensifying. The question was how total must be the uprooting of existing society and how new the relationship of theory to practice. The studies enabled Marx (*Marx, not Engels*) to see the possibility of new human relations, not as they might come through a mere "updating" of primitive communism's equality of the sexes, as among the Iroquois, but as Marx sensed they would burst forth from a new type of revolution.

Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future

All too many of today's Women's Liberationists have rejected "Marxism" as if Engels' *Origin of the Family* was Marx's view, without ever digging into Marx's Marxism.... What we now know as the *Ethnological Notebooks*...when set in the context of his philosophy of revolution and human development, led to the conclusion that revolution could come first in a backward land, *provided* the historic conditions were ripe and the revolution related itself to the rest of the world.

To order, see ad, p. 7.

ESSAY

Iran: Secularism and social emancipation

by Raha

The Present Historic Moment

Long before the mass discontent appeared as a popular political uprising in recent months, the Iranian ruling powers sensed the awakening of the repressed yet un-conforming population as the foreboding of an approaching storm. They were more perceptive than the opposition leaders who had turned inward after the failed attempts of the 1990s that focused on the state as the locus of social change. The "silent revolution" simmering in the depths of the collective consciousness, was fast reaching the surface and turning outward.

Ahmadinejad's regime clearly understood itself as the counter to the coming revolution. But despite all repressive measures during his first four-year term, it became clear that his task remained largely unfinished. Hence the need to "will," from above, his "re-election" in 2009. Even within the traditional conservative camp, constant social unrest led to fragmentation and strife.

The re-emergence of the multi-dimensional popular uprising, before and after the elections of June 12, proves that the so-called "quiescent" decade was really a time of political maturation, re-thinking and recollection. This intellectual fermentation was reflected in translations of works of Hegel, Marx, Lukacs, Luxemburg, Marcuse and Dunayevskaya, to name a few, as well as conferences celebrating the 200th anniversary of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, and the unprecedented popular reception of lectures by such scholars as Antonio Negri and Jürgen Habermas.

This "epoch-making renaissance in political and cultural discourse"¹ caused such discomfort in official circles that the director of the Iranian Institute of Philosophy exclaimed, "Of the 15 doctoral candidates at the institute, 11 are working on Western philosophy. Only 4 of them are writing Ph.D.'s on Islamic philosophy."

A 23-member peacemaking delegation, coordinated by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, observed after visiting Iran in 2007, "Iran's love of philosophy can be found outside the corridors of academia as well." Everywhere they went, they saw "a deep passion for ideas, a palpable craving for intellectual dialogue..." (<http://www.forusa.org/programs/iran/march07report2part2.html>).

This thirst for ideas is now combined with a new political maturity. Under the impact of the ongoing struggles, reform leaders have turned to the ideals of the 1979 Revolution by highlighting its unfulfilled promises. The Green Movement is neither monolithic nor the full expression of the still developing social consciousness. As one student activist observed, the reform leaders "do not create breakthroughs. After all, they too are part of the 30-year power structure in Iran....What is important is the impact that Mousavi's presence at that position will have on the public sphere, and the activism that it will promote and advance." He concludes by saying that his support for a reform leader in an election "does not blur my identity with those reformers in the power structure" (<http://www.roozonline.com/english/interview/article/2009/january/27>).

Many publications have been created. Innumerable organizations have been formed. Thousands of weblogs and on-line journals have appeared. Public debate and dialogue are everywhere—in the Metro, in a taxi, at the workplace or in informal gatherings at home. There is no end to the energy and creativity of the people. As one worker stated, the workplace is where "everybody does nothing except find ways to get around blocked web sites and read the day's news" (<http://globalpost.com/print/3636975>).

This self-activity has generated a leap in self-consciousness—a whole new sense of **what is possible**. Had anyone, reformist or revolutionary, anticipated this new objective reality? Is there something inherently deficient in emancipatory theory that perpetually condemns it to arrive on the scene only **after the fact**? **Can theory and practice ever be united?**

Today's movement has not reached the scope of 1979 at its high point. But that's hardly an excuse to avoid a self-critique. It is high time to re-conceptualize theory as wholly immanent within the movement from practice, making the movement relate itself to itself, and become fully aware of its own potential, goals and aspirations. Once the masses gain self-knowledge and the corresponding judgment, the entire old system will no longer be tenable.

Islamic Republic's Conflicted Self-Understanding

For 30 years the theocratic state in Iran claimed legitimacy as the embodiment of the universal interests of society. The popular uprising demanding regeneration of society on a new basis has removed this justification.

The Islamic State's presupposition was the 1979 Revolution. In its self-confident 1980s it devoured its own children, turning against the very forces that helped bring it to power. A ruthless counter-revolutionary terror even drove its first ever elected President, Bani Sadr, into exile.

The eight-year war with Iraq fed religious nationalism and perfected the terror. The despotic state became an end in itself subordinating civil life. The "citizen" was a fiction, an abstract appendage to and mere servant of the state. For three decades the absolutist regime politicized the citizenry by reinventing enemies. The vengeful regime's eternal warfare against "infidels" tolerated no dissent. Every expression of opposition, however mild, was immediately branded as *Moharebe Khoda*, "the Enemy of God," to justify its eradication.

Religion became a means to a thoroughly secular aim. It was nothing but the religion of expediency, an empirical religion, fused with politics and nuclear science. This theocratic edification of political power brought the state religion into a direct clash with the consciousness of the people for whom religion was "*the sigh of the oppressed and the soul of a soulless world*."²

Having resorted to violence, torture and even rape in face of an unarmed but deep and widespread grassroots movement, the state has lost the battle for the minds of the people. With its "spiritualism" fully exposed for what it is, a crass materialism, it has no other strategy but the savage unleashing of brute force to guarantee its secular survival. When the so-called heavenly realm comes crashing down, and discloses itself as but the sheer instrument of secular domination, the people can no longer take refuge in a celestial "beyond" and escape from the here and now. The political and the religious alienations intermerge. **The critique of "heaven" becomes a social critique of the contradictory reality on earth.**

Political fissures in established ruling circles are reflected in theological divides. The contradiction within religious thought has assumed the shape of the "theology of doubt" among a formidable section of the clerics. Political religion, a religion that thinks politically, has come to a certain self-understanding that it is the religion of domination. Some within the religious camp no longer want to continue with self-deception, and now take refuge in what they call "the pure Mohammedan Islam" (*Islam-eh nab-eh Mohammadi*). Prominent theologians, among them the renowned Abdulkarim Soroush (<http://www.dr.soroush.com/English.htm>), want to free civil society from state religion and advocate freedom of religion. They resemble modern day Islamic Lutherans who want to overcome the "faith in the authority by restoring the authority of faith."

Religious consciousness has reached a moment of internal combustion. The clerical establishment, headed by the Supreme Leader, seeks to relieve this internal torment by safeguarding their power at all cost. No more playing with the idea of "religious democracy." After the fiasco of the latest election, their claim to "legitimacy" has become merely a direct link with "God!"

The "idealism" of this hypocritical state is manifest in a most materialistic way—the display of the force of arms. Those who pretended to be at war with the materialism of the modern world sustain their power only with the most sophisticated modern technologies. The "Islamic Republic," stripped of its ideological religious shell, has evolved into a security-military-police state.

Where does the new social critique start? Should the spectrum of forces that identify themselves with "secularism" start by a critique of religious consciousness in general or religion as such? Is the achievement of a secular society an end in itself?

Reaching for the Future: A Perspective

The despotic regime in Iran that denies its citizens freedom of conscience, freedom to think and even to worship, is far worse than a 21st century version of the inquisitors of the Middle Ages. It is more technologically advanced in its arsenal of torture, and in its use of modern media to deliver its message when it puts hundreds of political prisoners in front of the screens to abjure and recant. The Shah, too, shortly before his downfall, dared to put poets, writers and journalists on public trial!

The new regime combined politics with an ideology that administers every aspect of people's lives, public or private, while replacing the Monarch with the office of an unelected Absolute Leader whose command is Law. Under such tyranny, the desire for political emancipation from state religion has gained a near universal appeal. The call for a secular society is certainly legitimate and a great step forward.

Yet in the wake of this great ongoing upheaval, it is imperative not to limit our vision of the future; not only because despotism can also take a secular form, but also because **we have witnessed how an epochal revolution 30 years ago got aborted when**

all the concrete demands for a new way of life after the overthrow of the Shah were completely submerged under what was also a legitimate demand: "anti-imperialism." Can we meet the challenge of our time with a fuller, concrete response?

"Secularism" was born of a widespread revolution in manifold forms of science and culture, culminating in the great French Revolution. This revolution ushered in the modern age, driving religion out of political power and into the private realm. It was a great leap forward to dethrone religion by bringing in "the goods and furnishings of the Here and Now" (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 512). Yet over 200 years later, there is not just the rise of political Islam in the "East" but also the invasion of the "public sphere" by Christian fundamentalism in the "West."

Secularism's worldliness did not confront human self-alienation in its material form. The antithesis of faith and knowledge fails to touch on the human content of either religion or secular knowledge. Soroush appeals to the "right of reason," based on the enlightened "I," against dogmatic faith. He attacks the idea of revolution as incompatible with reason because revolutionaries, defined by what they are against, are a "long way from knowing what they favor" (<http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2007-03-30-soroush-en.html#>). However, it is not the enlightened

"I" but rather the **historic reason** of Iranian masses who brought this momentous historic turning point, including the challenge to dogmatic faith.

Therefore, the positive within the negative, what Hegel called the negation of the negation, must be found **within** the revolution. The critique of religion as such will, yet again, leave the movement unprepared for **what happens after** the existing theocratic regime is overthrown. Are we now con-

demned to undergo the vicissitudes of a secular capitalistic development, a development which today has put a question mark over human survival on this planet? The positive human content of both secular life and religion is a social endeavor. It can only be realized through social emancipation beyond the political form of the state.

Soroush's goal of restoring the religious human as a moral, pious being apart from the worldly realm separates religion (faith) from history and the historical religious consciousness. He does resemble Luther, who, after all, betrayed those who wanted to realize the human content of religion. Luther's challenge to the religious hierarchy unleashed a revolutionary peasant movement led by religious leaders like Thomas Munzer. They fought the aristocracy and the Church, which was a huge continent-wide money-making enterprise built on the backs of the peasants. Munzer and his followers thought they were following Luther's teaching about realizing principles in real life without the mediating hierarchy of the Church. But Luther betrayed them by siding with the German princes in a great slaughter.

Secularism challenges religion without confronting its material basis in human self-alienation. Workers, who have no commodity to sell but their own labor power, are alienated from their own labor and are related to each other through things. Freedom under a secular state, says Marx, is only defined negatively. The other person is "not the realization of...freedom, but the barrier to it" (Marx, "On the Jewish Question," *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 163). The positive expression of freedom is not in the isolated individual, the ego, but, in the case of labor, the human content of cooperative labor realized by freely associated labor.

In Iran today, many tendencies are inside an ideological bubble detached from material life, the production and reproduction of life through human labor. Yet where are the workers' rights in the demands for civil liberties? Are workers a "sphere in civil society that is not of civil society" as Marx put it? Workers are vocal in demanding the right to organize, the right to strike, but the reform leaders cannot hear them. Workers have gone on strike for unpaid wages, in some cases unpaid for six months to a year. They are bludgeoned and imprisoned when they take to the streets and ask for it.

The explicit inclusion of labor could add a new universal dimension to the spontaneous forms of social solidarity in today's liberatory struggles. At its high point, the emancipatory movement is not yet alienated from its social content in the form of an abstract whole, either as a monolithic political Party or a State power. Now is the time to work out how to avoid yet another unfinished revolution and finally achieve what Marx called "human emancipation" when "the actual, individual man has taken back into himself the abstract citizen...when he has recognized and organized his own powers as **social** powers so that social force is no longer separated from him as political power" (MECW, 3:168).



Iranian woman confronts authorities at demonstration

1. Danny Postel, "Iran and the Future of Liberalism," http://www.theliberal.co.uk/issue_12/politics/iran_postel.1_12.html

2. Karl Marx's *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 131.

AFGHAN LIVES SUCKED INTO U.S. QUAGMIRE

Malalai Joya said it as plainly as anyone could: "Eight years ago, women's rights were used as one of the excuses to start this war. But today Afghanistan is still facing a women's rights catastrophe. Life for most Afghan women resembles a type of hell that is never reflected in the Western mainstream media." The Lead article in the Oct.-Nov. *N&L*, "Afghan lives and freedom sucked into U.S. quagmire," did more than powerfully reflect that real situation. It put it in the context of what all principled opposition to war must stand on, pointedly quoting it from our 1960 Resolution on "War and Peace": "Our opposition to war must spell out not only what we are against but what we are for: a world of new human relations, beginning at the point of production, and encompassing all the dimensions opened up by humanity's many-faceted struggles for freedom."

Member N&L Committees
Chicago

It's about time to read a good narrative on Afghanistan. I just got through reading the Oct.-Nov. issue of *N&L* and it's clear nobody else really knows this stuff. Thanks for following it so closely. I didn't know the descent into backwater Islamism was so recent. It's a slippery slope. Just wait until we descend into backwater jesu-fascism.

Ceylon
Memphis

Afghanistan has been falling by the wayside, overshadowed by the healthcare reform debate and other issues. But Afghanistan has profound implications for the rest of the world. It is a microcosm of many problems because it could end up being Obama's Vietnam.

Afghanistan represents the larger quagmire we're all in despite having a "nice person" sitting in the White House.

Htun Lin
Bay Area, California

Obama's pragmatism may not go far enough. He may succeed in vanquishing al Qaeda, but he doesn't address what it means to have human relations in Afghanistan. "Peace" is not enough. It is why people like Malalai Joya keep reappearing and demand more than just peace.

Asian-American
San Francisco

AN 'OFFICIAL' DEATH TOLL FOR IRAQ?

The Iraqi government recently issued an "official" death toll of 85,000 killed in almost five years of war, which doesn't include the year of chaos immediately following "shock and awe." I took note of the significant number of deaths of journalists and university professors, ten times higher than assassinations of lawyers and judges. I was mystified at first by the high number of university professor deaths and then wondered how many more students' deaths there must be. I thought the high journalist deaths might be because of their direct involvement on the ground. But university professors? I decided that it must have to do with the battle of ideas.

I accept as more accurate the death toll issued by Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and Al Mustansiriya University in Baghdad. They estimate over 600,000. If you consider the deaths from events which are not "immediate" i.e., mortality rates from a shattered healthcare and civilian infrastructure, malnutrition, suicides, medical neglect, war refugees, homelessness, etc., then the 600,000 figure is much more credible.

Healthcare Worker
California

CHILDCARE AND MARX'S VISION OF THE FUTURE

The first lady of California, Maria Shriver, just published *A Woman's Nation*, which stems from her discovery that 49% of the U.S. workforce is now comprised of women. The focus of her book is that women have become more educated, and now have more choices. But having choices does not negate the need to care for her children. While the decision to enter the workforce is challenging for any woman with a family, Maria Shriver failed to address the issues faced by the multitude of women without the class privilege she has.

The essay by Beth Sandner and Urszula Wislanka (*N&L*, Oct.-Nov. 2009) lays out the harsh realities those women are confronted with daily. Draconian budget cuts, made by the Terminator himself, Gov. Schwarzenegger, eviscerated the last remnants of social programs designed to assist the most vulnerable people of society. Those cuts, necessitated by a need to shore up capitalism, are an infamy similar to the austerity programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund on the Third World.

In contrast are the continued efforts of teachers to provide the kind of education that all children deserve. The educational requirements of children are inextricably linked to the future of humanity.

Faruq
California

Teachers used to have full-time positions with benefits. Then they got part-time jobs, with fewer benefits. Now I have three jobs, two as a teacher hired as an "independent contractor," with no benefits and no protection. The institutions ask me to make a commitment for at least a year but they make no commitment to me. This continued push to

privatize at all levels reduces accountability and oversight.

Jeff
San Francisco

The essay, "Childcare & Marx's vision of future," raises crucial points regarding the current educational system in the U.S. As an elementary teacher in a public school, I can attest that many issues noted in the essay are those we live with every day and that they demand deep changes.

However, I found one point confusing. It is where the essay links the man/woman relationship, as Marx categorized it, with child raising:

"The present crisis calls for revisiting Marx on many fronts, but especially what he considered the most fundamental way we reproduce our humanity: the man/woman relation and the social endeavor of raising children."

Raya Dunayevskaya singled out the man/woman relationship as extremely important for Marx. She highlighted that Marx believed it was that relationship which revealed "to what degree, man as a species has become human." However, Marx did not connect that relationship to reproduction or to raising a family. He totally opposed the way families existed under capitalism and was horrified at the way child labor was used under capitalism. As the authors point out, the only use capitalism has for any living beings (adults or children) is in the production of value they create for continuation of that system. Marx also wrote on how the educational system under capitalism is alienated from genuine knowledge and learning.

More discussion is needed, and *N&L* can provide a forum that will continue to be important to its readers.

Erica Rae
Chicago

READERS' VIEWS

THE MANY ISSUES OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION

The talk that Angela Davis gave to the National Women's Studies Association Conference made me angry. She had no trouble saying that her activism included intense battles over the role of women in the Black Panther Party who thought women didn't deserve leadership positions, yet she had not one word to say about the disgusting sexism and totalitarianism within the Communist Party, of which she was a member from 1968 until 1991 and actually ran for Vice President on the Communist ticket in 1980 and 1984! This, despite the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August of 1968.

When she was on a tour of Russia in the early 1970s, Czechoslovak freedom fighter Jiri Pelikán appealed to her in a letter to speak out against the Soviet leaders and help free political prisoners, including Karel Kosik. She stonewalled him. Her friend Bettina Aptheker is more honest in her autobiography detailing the CP's extensive, and by now well documented, sexism.

Women's Liberationist
Illinois

I had thought the rumbling by Blue Dog Democrats about stronger restrictions on abortion in the healthcare bill was a sideshow, but then I watched a solid majority adopt the Stupak amendment extending bans on abortion coverage to private plans partly subsidized by the government. It would be appalling enough to reintroduce and pass the Hyde Amendment 33 years after the fact, when the politics should be when do we repeal it, but I am stunned by the degree to which demonizing abortion in 2009 is called good politics, even after the murder of Dr. George Tiller.

Bob
Chicago

AN OPEN LETTER ON POLICE BRUTALITY

I am sending this as an Open Letter to President Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States: I would like to know if you would want your oldest daughter protected by the three Chicago Police officers (Mark Lamberg, Chris Nitintan, and Chris Trusoukalas) who brutally beat an eleven-year-old African American girl in Chicago on April 3, 2001? They were given 15 days, without pay, and then were given pay for 12 of those days. They are still in the Police Department. My question is whether you would allow these officers to watch over your or anyone else's daughter? I write to hear your answer.

George W. Smith, Jr.
Chicago

Editor's note: See *Black/Red View* column, page 1 this issue.

IN MEMORIAM TO IAN MACDONALD

With great sadness, I have to tell you that Ian MacDonald passed away in hospital on Sunday morning. Ian had been in poor health for some months, but less than two weeks ago he was admitted to hospital and diagnosed with cancer. Even then, we had hopes that he could fight the disease, and his sudden passing comes as a great shock. Ian was a fine friend and comrade, and we will miss him terribly.

A tribute to Ian has been posted on the website of his union branch: <http://www.surreycountyunison.org.uk/> Under the heading, "Ian Macdonald—Social

Worker, Trade Unionist, Marxist-Humanist—1957-2009," it noted: "Ian was one of a kind—an honest, hardworking and committed trade unionist and socialist—who always put the needs of members first. Ian was never afraid to speak up for workers and spent his life organizing and defending workers in Surrey, in Britain and internationally. Many of the rights, terms and conditions we take for granted in Surrey would not exist if Ian had not been at the fore."

Richard
England

TRANSGENDER REMEMBRANCE



Duanna Johnson

On Oct. 20, the Eleventh International Transgender Day of Remembrance commemorated people who have died because they were transgender or did not fit gender norms—more than one person every month.

In Memphis 30 attended a church service and vigil at the Neshoba Unitarian Universalist Church, for a reading of over 500 names of the deceased. Casey Lanham of Perpetual Transition stated that the cousins of Duanna Johnson, a Memphis transgender woman who was murdered last year, were here.

Rev. Bill Neely of Neshoba Church compared the murders of transgender people to those of gay man Matthew Shepard and African American James Byrd, Jr., whose names are on anti-hate-crime legislation. He stated that the LG-BTQI community needs to stop putting transgender people "in the back seat" of their human rights movement.

Adele
Memphis

DIALOG ON 'RISING FASCISM'

Gerry Emmett's article on "Rising Fascism Grounded in American Racism" (Oct.-Nov. *N&L*) misses the point. The Sept. 12 march in Washington, D.C., was certainly ominous and racist, and we need to watch the situation closely, but we must not jump to conclusions. That march does not represent a spontaneous and indigenous fascist movement, but is instead well-financed and orchestrated by huge corporate interests with vast media support. That corporate degeneracy is a reflection of the deep economic crisis in which we find ourselves.

Dangerous as it is, it is not any kind of mass movement, and in reality, despite appearances, the far right is actually "on the ropes," at least for now. The real story is still the fact that huge numbers of white workers voted for Obama. The best thing Obama could do to defuse the far right is to move to the left.

Critic
Oakland

It was sobering to read the article on a "rising fascism" today. As one who came to the movement way back during World War II, I was made aware of what fascism is and how it arises, and objected to the ease with which the New Left in the 1960s called all reactionaries "fascists," without any understanding of what fascism really is. What was sobering to me in Emmett's article was its warning of what now is threatening. The first real chill I felt in that direction was the vicious hatred expressed toward McCain himself, at one of his election rallies, because he dared not to be as rabid as they.

Octogenarian
Chicago

ENVIRONMENTALISM'S WORLDWIDE STRUGGLES

I want to urge all who can to sign the petition being circulated by environmental activists in New York, that asks Governor Paterson to withdraw an imminent statement on oil and gas mining. The petition demands that, instead, he continue the present moratorium that can prevent the threatening high-volume, horizontal well hydrofracking hazards in New York's Marcellus Shale region. (See "'Fracking' in New York," Oct.-Nov. *N&L*.)

Environmental Activist
Ithaca, New York

On Pacifica Radio's *Democracy Now*, Nov. 10, an environmentalist stated that groundwater in New York after "fracking" was tested to contain radiation. One of the many toxic chemicals is probably some form of uranium or radium used to fracture the rocks. This is just one more example of toxic capitalist production's insanity.

Basho
California

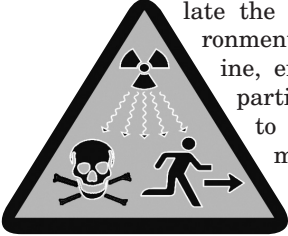
We want you to know about the rally for climate justice Nov. 30 by the community of Mehdiganj in Varanasi, India, that demanded the closure of the Coca-Cola bottling plant. Groundwater levels have fallen drastically in and around Mehdiganj since Coca-Cola began operations in 1999, impeding access to water for the rural and agricultural communities. At the same time, India is experiencing its worst drought in the last 40 years, with thousands losing their crops as the groundwater levels dropped. Coca-Cola responded to the campaign to have its plant shut down by announcing that it has become "water neutral"—a preposterous suggestion that it has no impact on water resources. Readers can visit our position paper on the rally and protest at <http://www.Indiasource.org/campaigns/coke/2009/mehdiganjrally.html>.

India Resource Center
San Francisco

On Nov. 17, the self-organized assembly of neighbors in the area of Tino-

gasta, Argentina, issued a "red alert," anticipating the imminent arrival of machinery to begin uranium mining. They called for "all neighbors to be alert to come to the defense of our land. Please spread the word." Since 2007 they have fought to prevent open-air uranium mining at sites close to Tinogasta, warning of cancer and birth defects.

"Neighbors of Tinogasta Catamarca" is part of a nationwide movement, expressed in the Union of Citizen Assemblies against Looting and Pollution. Their demands include: NO open-air chemical mining; NO radioactive mining in any form; closure and environmental restoration of all abandoned mines and



of working mines that violate the General Environmental Law; genuine, effective citizen participation prior to approval of mining activities.

Tino-gasta's struggle against uranium mining needs support from all of us!

Environmental justice activist
Chicago



ONGOING PALESTINE/ISRAEL STRUGGLE

I went to a forum at DePaul University, "Acknowledging the Past, Building a Landscape for Future Reconciliation: Palestinians and Israelis on 1948 and the Right of Return."

It featured Ali Abunimah of the Electronic Intifada; Rula Awwad-Raferty, a Palestinian American; and Eitan Bronstein of the Israeli peace group Zochrot, which attempts to educate Jewish Israelis on the terrible things done to the Palestinians in the name of Israel from 1948 through today.

Rula talked and showed slides of her trip to the village where her family once lived. It is now rubble. The only reason she was allowed to go was because she

is a U.S. citizen. Ali Abunimah talked of the impossibility of a two-state solution because of facts on the ground. The Palestinian lands are like swiss cheese divided up by Jewish Israelis. The only access roads are checkpoints at the wall. The wall is mostly on Palestinian land, thus more Palestinian land is being stolen. Ali believes that Jewish Israeli thinking is changing because of the work of Eitan on Zochrot, which is featured in the Israeli mainstream media.

I don't know if there is hope, but there is much sadness and a long way to go. The day before, I went with a Muslim elder to Muslim Community Center. We agreed that the most important thing is that we are all human beings.

Mark Blair
Chicago



AN IMPORTANT CORRECTION

Please print a correction in the next *N&L* to the article on p. 10 of the Oct.-Nov. issue titled "Quebec: Taking Back 'Les Plaines.'" The singer who read parts of the FLQ Manifesto should have been identified as the "Haitian-Québécois singer Luck Mervil," rather than: "...Haitian singer...."

An important part of his presence there was that he represents the pluralism of today's Québec in which Haitians play a prominent role, and he is also an important Québec "indépendantiste." Without this correction, the article loses some of its message. I would also like to see it made to the online version of that issue, if that is possible.

Remerciements!

D. Cheneville

Many thanks for calling this to our attention. The correction has already been made on our website.



HONDURAS RESISTANCE

The first-hand account in the Oct.-Nov. *N&L* of what precipitated the coup d'état in Honduras bears striking parallels to what unfolded in Haiti on Feb. 29, 2004, when another democratically elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aris-

tide, was removed from office by way of a coup d'état. The distinction between the two events is the less overt participation of the U.S. government in President Zelaya's ouster from office. In both cases



Both Aris-tide and Zelaya tried to bring about socioeconomic change that would provide some relief in the masses' daily struggle for subsistence. They attempted to restructure fiscal policy that would in a small measure create a redistribution of wealth. What is clear is that those who are unwilling to be mere minions for capital are subject to the jeopardy of a coup.

Prisoner
California



PUERTO RICAN STRUGGLES

I was a subscriber some years back but have been a long time out of touch. The struggle for a decent society continues. Here in Puerto Rico we recently had a successful general strike against the neoliberal government, which has laid off thousands of government workers and is privatizing public schools and public service on the pretext of a California-style economic crisis, while big corporations get fat contracts. I want to start getting *N&L* again and to report on the workers' struggle here. As an example, some workers at the Rafael Hernandez Airport in Aguadilla, who work as firemen, disaster response and security, were recently fired for not showing up to work on the general strike day. Most either marched in the protest that day, Oct. 15, or just called in sick. The reason given for firing them was the Patriot Act, in that they allegedly left the airport vulnerable and at risk by not reporting to work.

Supporter
Aguadilla, Puerto Rico

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12/09

Prisons influence the world

by Robert Taliaferro

Torture, class and cultural wars, financial scams—these are issues we hear about in daily news reports or that visit us each evening in television programming.

During prime time the networks call such issues "compelling drama" or "riveting entertainment," yet for so many in this country—and around the world—these issues are real events that are far from entertainment.

Nowhere is this more true than in U.S. prisons. In one of the ironies of American culture, how people are treated in the community and the issues they must face, often find their roots in prisons.

We live in a social environment that requires multiple levels of dialogue to understand the need to discuss an issue, and then other multiple levels of dialogue to even start to find a solution. Further, we live in a politicized fear-based culture that tends to challenge the need for change.

More often than not, these are the same individuals who challenge the need for discussing a variety of social issues that may be deemed controversial, such as the continued disparity between races, cultures and classes; continued gender disparity issues; and issues relating to discriminatory treatment of individuals due to their sexual orientation, just to name a few.

Prison issues often seem the most controversial, yet it is a necessity to talk about prisons and the men, women and children who populate them because they are the testing grounds for many policies, practices and procedures which find their way to the general public.

Feodor Dostoyevsky wrote, "The degree of civilization in a society is best judged by entering its prisons." It is this concept that Charles Dickens considered when he visited Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia and was appalled by the treatment of prisoners. His commentary helped spark the movement which eventually closed that prison.

One of the ironies of U.S. jurisprudence, however, is that the same Victorian ethics which found the conditions in prison to be barbaric was sold a bill of goods in developing the electric chair as a "humane" form of execution.

Today we should not be surprised that torture was used in the "war on terror," as it has been a part of the criminal justice process in this country for decades.

Sleep and sensory deprivation, the use of stress positions, degradation—these are all processes that are used on a daily basis in police departments and prisons around the country. Any Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch report will indicate that torture is not restricted to U.S. police agencies or prisons. But there is a level of refinement that the issue receives in the U.S. as prisons try to keep such events hidden.

Yet torture is only one part of the U.S. prison experience that finds its way to the community. Lobbies for universal DNA testing, national identity cards and implanted GPS tracking devices for humans, all have their foundations in the Prison Industrial Complex.

Prisons, administrators and legislatures have also—in the interest of "protecting the public"—been harbingers of other criminal actions for years. From financial scams that are much more sophisticated than a country warden skimming money from the Inmate Welfare Fund, to prison staff who knowingly promulgate class and cultural problems inside of prisons so that tensions result in overtime, these children of capitalism are used as weapons of fear to arm disparity within the community, thus strengthening the impact and dissonance of the prison industrial complex.

In the Oct.-Nov. *News & Letters*, Georgiana Stewart writes about the corruption one finds in California prisons, and Gerry Emmett writes about the growing fascism that is grounded in U.S. racism. Seemingly dissimilar in scope, we come to realize that each separate issue allows the other to exist.

"Capitalism," wrote Joseph Schumpeter in *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, "inevitably and by virtue of the very logic of its civilization creates, educates and subsidizes a vested interest in social unrest."

It is this social unrest that breeds both contempt

and revolutionary thoughts and processes that must be made into practical solutions if we are to change compelling dramas and riveting entertainment, into flesh and blood social transactions that reforms disparity and fear-based governance, and creates the tactile foundation of democracy.

John Ruskin noted that a reformation of our educational system would go far to create the means by which we would be able to change the way that we use our prisons, and that is one direction to follow.

Perhaps the best solution is to not go into the process of change like some defeated warriors seeking to win at something that could have been solved, not by legislated criminality that is said to be lawful, but by forming a political community that demands accountability from its citizens, and even more so from those who are delegated to both create and interpret the law.

We all live in the generation that has witnessed one of the biggest changes in U.S. history. We need to ensure that its effects are more far-reaching, equitable, and universal.

BLACK/REDVIEW

continued from p. 1

myself going to cuss out this sucker, I said to myself to just calm down. I sat down with him and told him what happened. He said, I'm going to send a sergeant out, you tell him what happened and you get this kid to the hospital. The sergeant came out; I told him what happened. He said send a note to the doctor but don't fill out the report. We went to the hospital. The minute you tell them the cops did it, everybody gets afraid.

I called the news and told a young newscaster what happened. We called all the TV stations, who said, Your 11-year-old granddaughter got beaten up by a cop? So what? They wouldn't say anything. The news guy did put us on the news about 5:00 a.m. They don't record what you say; they record what they want you to say. That's why Americans are so misled.

I tried to get hold of Johnnie Cochran. These lawyers said, We work with Johnnie Cochran. Being all upset and frustrated, I went with them. They said, You can't say anything to the newscasters. I said, What? Then I told all the newscasters who came that I wasn't giving interviews, so all the newscasters left.

NOTES INTIMIDATE POLICE

The hardest thing is to identify the cops who committed the crime. But we were able to identify them. My granddaughter said the one guy that got her had spiked hair. My neighbors took the risk and were able to identify them. At the deposition, they allowed the cops to bring loaded weapons, .357 magnums. In the middle of the interview, their lawyers said, Mister, you have to stop intimidating my officers. The only thing I was doing, I wrote down every word the cops said—that was scary to them!

As the case went on, I was going to the Police Board and took my whole family. About two years went by, I called the lawyer asking, How is the case going? He said it's going OK and I'll have to treat it like a car accident. I said, I don't want you treating it like a car accident; I'll take the case to somebody else. In about a couple of months he went before the judge and had me and my wife's names removed from the claim and settled the case. **I had told him at least I want my granddaughter to have enough money for college. Now my granddaughter is grown, out of school, and with no money for college.**

At the Police Board meetings I found two great friends, George, who never stops fighting, and then, three months later, Gerry. I found out you can have a better thing with a small organization than you can with a large. At the Board they showed me the papers that said the case has been settled. But it hasn't been settled with me. George has agreed to be with me and he has been there. When you have a friend on your side like that, the world can't really do you harm.

FRIENDS FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

It's been a hard fight. I'm smiling more tonight than I usually do. I don't have anything to smile about; I could cry for two or three hours. But that won't do any good. Do people really realize this is going on? I know being a Black person of 60 some odd years, it's the worst life a person could ever live, being Black. But, I give George a lot of credit, he doesn't look at it like that. He thinks it shouldn't be about Black or white; this should be a gentler world, but the world is not like that.

I want justice. Seems like we won't get justice. George is showing no signs of quitting. When I thought I wouldn't fight much longer, I know he'll be there. At 7:30 a.m., I know he's there. Regardless of what he has to do in life. This changed my whole life to another direction—just trying to get some kind of justice. When you can't get justice and you got God on your side, you still got justice. That's how I look at it.

Climate outcry rebuffed

The closer the world got to the UN negotiations in Copenhagen Dec. 7-18 for a treaty succeeding the Kyoto Protocol, the more it looked like a train wreck. What it showed most of all was the capitalist system and the countries most responsible for emissions of greenhouse gases stuck on a collision course with the reality of climate change. It was as if the rulers thought that talking to the engine could stop the train.

In truth, a flurry of conflicting activities set the ground for Copenhagen, especially the movements to limit global warming. On Oct. 24 over 5,200 events in 181 countries called attention to the need to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to the equivalent of 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide.

At the same time reports continued to pour out. The International Energy Agency—far from radical, it answers to the U.S. and allied governments—released its World Energy Outlook 2009, warning starkly: "Continuing on today's energy path...would mean rapidly increasing dependence on fossil fuels, with alarming consequences for climate change and energy security."

Meanwhile, scientists working with the Global Carbon Project released a study showing that carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel burning rose by 41% from 1990 to 2008, and accelerated in the 2000s. "Developing countries" now emit more than developed countries, partly due to the moving of industrial production to exploit low wages and lax environmental controls, shipping the product back to the rich countries.

On another front, a number of intergovernmental meetings took place. At the UN climate talks in Barcelona in November, African nations walked out for a day, demanding deeper emissions cuts by 2020 from rich nations. Kemal Djemouai, chair of the African group, said, "People are dying now, when the developed countries are not willing to express...ambitious reductions."

The pre-summit talks made clear that the leading carbon emitters—the U.S., Europe, China, Russia, India—were not going to commit to cuts of the magnitude needed to avoid catastrophe in coming decades, nor were rich countries going to commit the money needed to finance a low-carbon development path for poorer countries. Billed just months ago as "make or break," Copenhagen was demoted in advance to a "political agreement" rather than a binding treaty, which the Obama administration suddenly termed "unrealistic."

Led by the Maldives, 11 nations most vulnerable to climate change drafted a declaration calling for more ambitious, legally binding targets without delay. They pointed to the "existential threat" posed to nations like the Maldives and Kiribati, which would be submerged even under the two-degree temperature rise limit invoked by most countries; and to Bhutan and Nepal, whose glacier-fed water supply is endangered. "The fate of the most vulnerable will be the fate of the world," they warned. The vulnerable will just experience it sooner.

At press time the Copenhagen conference has not begun, but it will face multiple sizable protests, direct action, and an alternative "people's summit" called Climate Forum 09.

—Franklin Dmitryev

Celebrate the 150th anniversary of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry with *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*



by Raya Dunayevskaya

This book gives the revolutionary history of America.

"Marx kept his eyes glued on the movement of the Negro slaves. When the Civil War broke out, and 'the Great Emancipator' did all in his power to limit it to a white man's war for Union, Marx began to popularize the speeches and analyses of the Abolitionists, especially those Wendell Phillips wrote against the Northern conduct of the war..."

SEE AD PAGE 7

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EDITORIAL

Pakistan needs a revolution

As President Obama weighs sending yet more U.S. troops to Afghanistan, the situation in neighboring Pakistan continues to deteriorate. The Pakistani government has been waging campaigns against local Taliban in the country's western regions, creating a massive flow of refugees from these areas: an estimated three million in Swat, and two million in South Waziristan. Hundreds of people have been killed, including many civilians.

ALL PARTIES MURDER CIVILIANS

At the same time U.S. drone attacks in these areas increased in recent months. Of the hundreds killed, an estimated 98% were civilians. As one woman asked visiting U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, "How do you define terrorism? Is it the killing of people in drone attacks?" The Taliban in Pakistan have also stepped up their suicide bombings, including a recent attack on a market in Peshawar that killed 112 people, most of them women and children. This horror indicates that they have drawn closer to Al Qaeda, which specializes in such mass slaughter.

The civilian population in much of Pakistan today is under attack by all parties to this conflict: the Taliban, the Pakistani government and the U.S.

Tragically, too much opinion in the U.S. today echoes the lies of previous Pakistani governments. Far from being dominated by fundamentalism, as it is often portrayed, Islam in Pakistan has historically been much more tolerant and influenced by Sufism, a religion of mystics, poets and syncretists seen in large religious festivals or shrines. The "maulvis"—a pejorative term for religious fundamentalists—have never received majority support in fair elections.

Furthermore, there is a strong tradition of Leftist politics among many Pakistanis, and a vital women's movement has existed there. What has in part led to the present crisis is the support fundamentalists received from such anti-popular, U.S.-friendly dictators as General Zia ul-Haq who, from 1977 to 1988, seized power and used religious laws to prop it up. This is also the period when the Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) formed ties with Afghan fundamentalists, including the precursors to the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

FUNDAMENTALISM SERVES POLITICS

Zia's promotion of fundamentalism was to crush his political opposition, especially that of women and the Left. As one Pakistani activist said recently, "It was meant to wipe out political life in Pakistan." The changed religious laws were accompanied by outright killing of Leftists and the criminalization of dissent.

The recent ousting of General Pervez Mousharraf's government was an opening. But it will take a true social revolution to overcome the state of powerlessness forced upon the people of Pakistan. The current government tries to satisfy U.S. demands for attacks on the Taliban, and at the same time distinguish between "good" and "bad" Taliban in order to make deals. It seeks to repair the image of the Pakistani military in the eyes of those who are genuinely threatened by the Taliban.

Only a small but entrenched elite in Pakistan can imagine that they can profit from this untenable situation. Because some have been maneuvering in this way since the days of the British occupation, they imagine it can go on forever. But in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, it is clear that a revolutionary perspective is also the only really practical one available for the majority of people.

The arming of yet more tribal factions, under the advisement of the U.S. today, is not the answer. What is needed is a demobilization of all the armed factions including both the army and the various fundamentalist groups. The U.S. must also cease assaults and threats. Deserving greater support are movements like

the peasants of Hari who occupied the Karachi Press Club this year protesting land seizures. They represent a true mass movement for freedom and justice rooted in Pakistan's real history, as do the peasant women who confronted and blocked police attacks. In places like Hashtnagar in North-West Frontier Province, these movements are attacked by both government and Taliban forces.

Only when the truth about these genuine freedom movements becomes known, when their voices are heard and understood as part of the needed world revolution, can we say that revolutionary internationalism is being reborn. It requires the perspective of the philosophy of revolution, which is our ultimate responsibility to history.

Movement for LGBTQ

equality reinvigorated

The National Equality March on Oct. 11 brought together reinvigorated and newly-activated activists



to push for full legal equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) citizens. The event, drawing an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 marchers, was a bigger success than its organizers, a loose nationwide steering committee calling themselves Equality Across America, could have imagined. It owed part of its success to a darker moment—the

passage of Proposition 8 in California in 2008.

In May 2008, California's Supreme Court ruled that denying marriage to same sex couples was unconstitutional. Opponents called for a ballot initiative to amend the constitution to take away the LGBTQ right to marry. When it passed, many young LGBTQ people and their straight friends, who had grown up with Ellen, Will and Grace, and Gay-Straight Alliances in their high schools, were shocked by the visceral lesson of hate and inequality from California's voters.

In just a few days a coordinated nationwide protest called Join The Impact was planned for Nov. 15, 2008. While established groups helped in some cases, many of these rallies were organized by people who had never before picked up a bullhorn. In Chicago, 1,500 people packed Daley Plaza on a frigid Saturday afternoon for a rally, then took to the streets in an impromptu march up Michigan Avenue.

These new activists formed new groups. Obama made clear he wouldn't prioritize his campaign promises to the LGBTQ community. As more states passed pro-equality laws and more reactionary organizations vowed to repeal them, activists realized that the state-by-state strategy had to make way for a national one.

Citing the 14th amendment to the Constitution, which says no state may deny equal protection under the law to any citizen, Equality Across America demands full equality in all matters governed by law and called for the National Equality March. Workshops and networking to build connections between folks from every congressional district preceded the march.

The march, winding past the White House and ending in a rally at the Capitol, included participants of all ages, races, genders and creeds, and from all corners of the country. Homemade signs and rally speakers also called for equality in employment, immigration, and protection from violence, as well as marriage.

Returning home enriched by the experience of organizing for the march, the Chicago group behind the Nov. 15 protest, Join The Impact Chicago, held a community strategy meeting, worked to lobby for the national hate crimes law, and mobilized to help protect marriage equality in Maine.

But on Nov. 5, around 200 Chicago activists again found themselves standing outside in the cold. The Maine effort to defeat Question 1 had failed, and voters again gave in to fear and hate. It was a brutal blow, as the Maine campaign had learned from the mistakes in California and so much momentum in the past year had made many hope history would not repeat itself. Marching through the dark to Federal Plaza, chanting "We demand equality," the people made it clear that they would not accept defeat.

—Amy Waters

Voicing the silent 'T'

This speech was given Nov. 5 in Chicago at the "Question 1" Rally, a protest of the vote in Maine that overturned legislation allowing same-sex marriage.

Today, I want to talk about the "T" in LGBTQ. You see, in the transgender community, people say that in LGBTQ, the "T" is always silent. But I don't want to believe that.

Because the battle is not just at the altar. It's on blue and pink baby blankets, in gendered public restrooms, and at Hunters Nightclub right here in Illinois.

My intention today is to ask you a simple question: why do we all share the same acronym? I mean, how are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning struggles all connected? It's not about how we view our bodies, whom we love, or where we party. It's that as kids, we were bullied for the same reason. We grew up feeling "wrong" for the same reason. We internalized hate for the same reason.

It's the reason why, in the early hours of June 28 40 years ago, trans women of color rose up at Stonewall and issued the "NOT ANYMORE" that echoes through rallies today.

That reason is called gendered oppression. Transphobia and homophobia are one and the same.

According to the Gay and Lesbian Task Force, people perceived to be trans are 17 times more likely to experience violence than people perceived to be gay in this country. Transgender people cannot stand up for marriage rights if we are not allowed to stand at all.

I'll be honest with you: I personally don't want marriage. I want our youth off the streets and out of prison. I want our elders to have the healthcare they deserve. And I don't want these things to depend on partnership status. But you're my family, so I stand with you today.

I am moved to ask you, will you also stand for trans struggles? Hunters Night Club in Elk Grove Village has instituted a door policy that bans patrons whose IDs do not match their gender presentations. This policy is unlawful, and unless you stand up with me and condemn it, the virus will spread.

So today I ask why you march under a rainbow banner? Is it because our dream is an impossibly tall mirage, with false promise of golden fortune from start to finish? Or is it because you live in the spectrum?

Thank you for committing to justice. I am proud to share your acronym.

—Kate Sosin
Co-Founder, Genderqueer Chicago

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Bisexual Queer activist Chloe Michelle Noble and Queer activist Jill Hardman are walking, hoping to raise awareness of nationwide LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Intersex) youth homelessness. Living in homeless youth communities as they cross the contiguous U.S., Operation Shine documents the widespread lack of resources for homeless Queer youth, advocating more guidance and support for them.

After Italian legislators rejected hate crimes protections for Gays and Lesbians and after several homophobic attacks, protesters held rallies in Rome calling for full equality and protection for all citizens.

Breaking its promises to abide by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Iran imposed the death penalty on Mehdi P., Mohsen G. and Nemat Safavi for committing homosexual acts as youth. Human Rights Watch and Iran's own Stop Child Executions are demanding that Iran revoke the sentences.

The American Psychological Association recently adopted a "Resolution on Appropriate Affirmative Responses to Sexual Orientation Distress and Change Efforts," admonishing young people, their parents, guardians, families, and mental healthcare providers to avoid treatments to make them "ex-gays." Research proved that such treatments don't work. Instead, the resolution encourages services "that provide accurate information on sexual orientation and sexuality, increase family and school support and reduce rejection of sexual minority youth."

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Unemployment, hallmark of capitalism

continued from p. 1

capital—a thieves' den that splits up the spoils extracted from workers in production, where their alienated labor creates all value. The overlords of social production tip the system into recurring crises precisely because their separation from production fosters the illusion that value can be generated from speculation. The \$700 billion TARP bailout was only the beginning as the Federal Reserve Bank just kept issuing trillions of dollars to buy and guarantee the value of banks' hidden bad assets. No wonder that, when the stolid American Bankers Association met in Chicago on Oct. 27, thousands marched proclaiming "the bankers got bailed out, we got sold out." By then U.S. workers had suffered through 22 straight months of job losses, a 70-year record, that now totals over 7.3 million U.S. jobs gone.

In another world from the protracted decline in the conditions of life and labor for ordinary workers, an even smaller

group of investment bankers, who regularly switch roles and become government policymakers, are now patting themselves on the back for having avoided a total meltdown and the abyss of another Great Depression one year ago. Then came November's dismal employment report, which engendered a resolute-sounding response from President Obama: "I will not rest until all Americans who want work can." However, this belied his pragmatic approach, which kowtows to those same Wall Street financiers who precipitated this crisis.

THEN AND NOW: THE 1930s AND TODAY

In the wake of a deepening disaffection among those who made possible his historic victory a year ago, President Obama scheduled a jobs summit in December to seek out ideas. At the same time the real direction of his thinking came to light when White House budget director Peter Orszag alerted domestic government agencies to plan for budget cuts because the President's January State of the Union address will focus on cutting the deficit in 2010.

This is totally at odds with Orszag's Nov. 3 comment to Charlie Rose that what is "crucially important to avoid...is...to repeat the mistake of 1937." Orszag was referring to President Roosevelt's attempt to reduce the deficit in 1937, which brought back the Depression with a fury. While government officials take a 1930s timeline as their perspective on current history and now celebrate having dodged a 1930s-style financial meltdown, the depression is being played out in the real economy. The real crisis now, as then, is not its appearance in the financial sector but in production, where capitalists are wary of any new real investment because the financial crisis and the immense vanishing of paper profits revealed a much diminished rate of profit.

Many economists, drawing on the experience of the 1930s, did warn Obama that the current crisis demanded a lot more deficit spending than the woefully inadequate \$787 billion stimulus package. What 1937 taught today's Keynesian economists is that massive deficit spending cannot stop anytime soon. What they forget to add is that it cannot stop at all without massive destruction of capital, which then was accomplished through total war and unspeakable barbarism.

BREWING INTER-CAPITALIST TENSION

In spite of the name of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, it was not "cooperation" but inter-capitalist tension over economic policy that prevailed there and throughout President Obama's East Asia trip beginning on Nov. 13. No sooner did the trade spat over U.S.-imposed tariffs on Chinese tires blow over than a new one erupted when the U.S. imposed anti-dumping duties on Chinese steel pipe a week before President Obama's first visit to Beijing.

In spite of the now universally recognized imminent danger to the life-sustaining capacity of the planet, APEC squabbling produced a pre-emptive announcement that there will be no new accord on global warming at the December Copenhagen climate summit. Deep trade disagreements disrupting APEC emerged because of diminished opportunities for capital accumulation in the post-crisis global economy. APEC nations, especially China, are frantically working out their own separate trade agreements, like a new one between Japan, South Korea and China.

Trade imbalances are driving a search for an alternative to the way social production in the global economy is managed, which is primarily through U.S.-China inter-state finance. Chinese state-disciplined cheap labor provides manufactured goods to U.S. and other Western consumers. When, due to the imbalance, a lot of extra dollars end up in Chinese banks, the Chinese

state uses those dollars to buy U.S. debt. Chinese state-capitalist financiers now hold over \$2 trillion in U.S. debt.

Chinese state financiers are now in the role of being the U.S.'s banker. They not only didn't bend to U.S. pressure over trade, but criticized the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank for continuing to fuel speculative investments and lectured Obama about U.S. deficits endangering the value of the dollar. They could stop buying U.S. debt, but then the whole finance system would collapse, including the value of their growing hoard of U.S.-denominated debt. They are searching for new relations with other centers of capital, dealing in other currencies than the dollar as a way out of this "mutually assured financial destruction." When centers of capital are confronting global capital's internal barrier to accumulation, lurking in the background of warring over trade and relative economic power is military power and real war.

THE SEARCH FOR NEW BEGINNINGS

New beginnings are emerging not only in opposition to finance capital in the political sphere but among workers—alienated from control of their own social production—fighting back in production. Auto workers at SsangYong in South Korea, partly inspired by the sit-down strike at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago, occupied their factory and constantly battled police for several months when threatened with a shutdown by banks and a Shanghai auto company.²

Even some Wall Street commentators, seeing how capital has totally usurped political power in the U.S., now simply accept that we are living through capitalism's death agony.³ The real question for the future is: what will replace it? Will capital's inherent despotism in everyday life result in a new form of totalitarianism? After all, Keynes said that his remedy of regulating economic activity through state spending works better in a controlled, totalitarian economy. The alternative is a new freedom emerging out of freely associated human activity in production that fully recognizes the social character of production.

As we put it in our editorial in the last issue: "The barriers to productive investment, and therefore to accumulation in the real economy, portend an even more total day of reckoning. For capital that can only mean a deeper collapse, wherein finance capitalists, whom Marx called the mere 'trustees' for capital's social ownership of production, will continue to transparently loot the public treasury to preserve the irrational capital relation at all cost. But this is also transparent for ordinary working people who are outraged and looking for a way to free themselves of being socialized according to the needs for capital accumulation. Never before has there been a greater need to return to Marx, not only for his prediction of total crises, multitudes of unemployed and a falling rate of profit, but his concept of liberation and human solidarity beyond capitalism."

1. For an excellent view of the depth of the crisis in California, which has the three U.S. cities with the most foreclosures, see *Crisis in California: Everything Touched by Capital Turns Toxic* (Insane Dialectical Editions, 2009) as well as their account of a visit to Sacramento's tent city at: <http://flyingpicket.org/node/46>.
2. For an inspiring video of these workers, who persisted through attacks by riot police, helicopters dropping tear gas, company-hired thugs, and shutoff of electricity and water, see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLXCRzxIDqc> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzIOmK2WvHI>
3. "Death of 'Soul of Capitalism': Bogle, Faber, Moore: 20 reasons America has lost its soul and collapse is inevitable," by Paul B. Farrell, *MarketWatch* (<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/americas-soul-is-lost-and-collapse-is-inevitable-2009-10-20>).

Marchers outraged at bankers and capitalism

Chicago—Outrage filled the air at the "Showdown in Chicago," three days of protests coinciding with the American Bankers Association meeting. It was capped by the Oct. 27 march and rally of 5,000 people from around the country. Many speakers and more signs spoke of the real crises affecting working-class people's lives: evictions, layoffs, long lines of applicants for a few jobs. A day care operator told of having to accept food instead of money from some unemployed parents. A young worker and father told of the difficulty of paying back student loans while trying to keep his family fed and housed. A roll was called of several Chicago neighborhoods, calling out how many foreclosures have displaced families in each since 2007, with the numbers climbing and climbing up to 2,215 in Austin. Every 13 seconds there is another foreclosure filing in the country, said Denise Dixon of National People's Action.

Equal to the outrage was the determination to fight, not only against the injustices that were so clearly seen by the 5,000 present, but also to create a society where working people are not exploited by a class of bloodsuckers, of which bankers have become a symbol. Armando Robles received hearty cheers when he told of the occupation of the Republic Windows and Doors

NYC housing crisis

New York—During World War II, the Federal government put a freeze on wages, prices and rents. After the war there was a severe housing shortage as millions of GIs came home, and several states such as New York responded with rent controls. Since then real estate interests have bought off local governments to eliminate or weaken these controls. Because of the very low vacancy rate and the number of rent regulated apartments, New York City has retained much of its rent regulated housing stock. By 2003, only about 3% of New York City's rental stock was vacant. Affordable housing for the working class exists mostly in rent regulated or subsidized private housing or in public housing. According to the NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, by 2002 NYC had over 3,208,000 housing units and 1,265,000 were unregulated.

By 1970 most of the rent regulated private housing was under a rent control law when Governor Rockefeller had the Legislature pass total vacancy decontrol. Landlords began to harass rent controlled tenants out of their apartments and then charge rents beyond the reach of much of the working class. This caused such public opposition that deregulation was repealed and those apartments already deregulated were put under a new system called "Rent Stabilization." Most apartments in NYC were under the old Rent Control Law but as those apartments were vacated, they were moved to Rent Stabilization.

In the ensuing 39 years, "Rent Controlled" apartments shrunk from over 1,000,000 units to about 40,000 while "Rent Stabilized" units rose to around 1,000,000. The remaining 40,000 rent controlled units have tenants who are mostly elderly. Both groups of regulated tenants have their rent increased differently; the rent stabilized by a NYC "Rent Guidelines Board" (RGB) and the rent controlled by the NY State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). The RGB is controlled by the Mayor of NYC and the DHCR by the Governor who are, in turn, greatly influenced by the real estate industry. Both groups of tenants have been subjected to rent increases far exceeding inflation or increased income. Rent Stabilized rents have gone up 374% and Rent Controlled by 631% in the past 38 years. In recent years, the real estate industry-controlled city and state governments have reintroduced vacancy decontrol. Hundreds of thousands of regulated apartments have been lost. The unavailability of affordable working class housing has reached crisis proportions.

Despite increases in landlord costs, their rate of profit has remained incredibly high. By 2001, landlords were realizing a 44% profit on regulated buildings excluding debt service, while one-fourth of all renters were paying more than 50% of their incomes in rent. Although seniors and the disabled are eligible for a rent freeze, their incomes have to be very low and their rents have to exceed one-third of their incomes. Rent controlled tenants have the lowest average income of all renters yet have been subjected to the highest increases.

The DHCR has just promulgated a rent increase of 12.9% over the next two years despite the economic crisis! Because rent controlled tenants are relatively few, they do not have the influence of other tenant groups. The prospect of many lower middle class seniors, who are not eligible for a rent freeze, having to uproot their lives and move out of their apartments, is very real. State and local government, under the control of the corporatist Democratic and Republican parties, will put the burden of the economic crisis on the backs of the working class. As everything else in capitalism, profit takes precedence over people's needs, whether in health care, social services or housing.

—Tom Siracuse

Chair of the Committee To Protect Rent Controlled Tenants

factory, where Robles had worked and led the union local, and even louder cheers when he encouraged other workers to do the same.

It was like being in a totally different world from the talking heads on TV announcing the end of the recession. Oh, sure, they'll acknowledge that unemployment is higher than it should be. But in that fantasy world you don't get a sense of how hard people have been hit, how many are living on the edge now, the depth of the outrage and the stirrings of revolt.

At the same time you could see top union bureaucrats like Rich Trumka, new president of the AFL-CIO, and Anna Burger, chair of Change to Win, try to contain that passion and limit workers to reforms within the capitalist system. Trumka talked about how the bankers have a job to do, and didn't do it correctly. He and other speakers painted a picture of society thrown into crisis by the bad actions of some greedy financial corporations, with not a word about capitalism itself, even though capitalism is the word on everyone's lips from many of the protesters to some economists and pundits who had always been its prizefighters. Capitalism has failed! You hear it everywhere. Now listen to the voices from below calling for a new society. —F.D.

Graduate student workers win strike

Champaign-Urbana, Ill.—My partner is a member of the G.E.O. (Graduate Employees' Organization, IFT-AFT Local 6300, AFL-CIO) and we walked the picket line today (Monday, Nov. 16) on the first day of their unprecedented strike. Graduate student Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Graduate Assistants (GAs) went on strike after months of dead-end shady bargaining by the university administration.

Over half a year of attempts at negotiation and more than three months of grad students working without a contract came to a head last weekend when the university failed to include tuition waiver protection language in the contract-to-be. The G.E.O. had already conceded a lot of ground by agreeing to far less than a living wage for all TAs and GAs, which was their original demand. The university in turn would not even include vague language that protects tuition waivers, which are the lifeline of most TAs and GAs.

Tuition waivers are seen by a large majority of the membership to be the most important issue facing graduate student workers. It is common practice at public universities in the U.S. to waive tuition in return for teaching undergraduates or other essential labor while a student is in a graduate program. But with lowered state funding and the corporatization of higher education, administrators are always looking for new streams of revenue. Charging grad students with tuition would cannibalize whole departments, and would result in higher education being available only to the privileged. The university bargaining team knows that if the G.E.O. wins explicit language defending tuition waivers in their contract, it would be harder to take their rights away piecemeal.

During this strike, the university should see very clearly that graduate students are essential to running the campus. Withholding labor will hopefully be disruptive enough and threatening enough to make the university realize that they can't pick on any graduate students without a response from all.

UPDATE: The G.E.O. won! On the second day of the strike, the university conceded to our last demand: tuition waiver protection. This strike and the gains from it set a precedent in labor struggles in higher education. It lets administrations know that if they try to erode access to higher education, there will be a fight.

In addition the G.E.O. secured protection from furloughs and six weeks parental leave. Both wins have implications for other unions on campus that will be fighting for the same rights in their upcoming negotiations. But perhaps the most important lesson for grad students, administrators, and undergraduates is that organized labor works. After a day and a half of 1,000 TAs and GAs picketing in the rain, grad students saw their hard work pay off in the form of real benefits in their contract that could only have been won through the efforts of determined, united workers!

—Graduate student and supporter

Cal. students' strike



Over 1,500 University of California at Berkeley students, teachers and employees gathered on Sproul Plaza Nov. 19 to kick off a three-day strike in response to lay-offs, furloughs and a 32% tuition fee hike. Many workers are former U.C. students who fear their children will be priced out of a U.C. education. The following day demonstrators brought bags filled with campus trash to dump at the main entrance of California Hall where Chancellor Robert Birgeneau's office is located. Between chants of "Trash outside, trash inside," protesters asked who would pick up the trash when all the custodians are laid off. On Nov. 20 students occupied Wheeler Hall as part of the ongoing actions.

—David M'Oto

'Non-lethal' weapons lethal to civil liberties

When the Pittsburgh police decided to use the "sound cannon" against peaceful protestors at the G20 summit in August, they may have signaled the end of peaceful protest in the United States. If torture be described as "organ failure," the Long-Range Acoustic Device (LRAD) has to be classified among the instruments that employ torture. The human body's smallest bones, along with some truly awesome delicate organs, transmit and interpret sound waves and establish our relationship to gravity (balance). LRAD is designed to temporarily disrupt hearing and disorient people's relationship to the ground under their feet.

A second kind of acoustic weapon generates a high-intensity sound that saturates the inner ear where the sense of balance is located. Some people's eardrums break; others never regain hearing in the wavelengths propagated; some become nauseous, puking uncontrollably. But these can be foiled with ordinary earplugs or a board that reflects the sound back to the "friendly personnel."

A third acoustic weapon, the Very Low Frequency modulator, finds larger organs to disrupt. From low to high power, the target will experience progressively: physical discomfort, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pains and resonating bones, "which can be quite painful" (see <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/munitions/acoustic.htm>).

Sound-wave generation is only one technique for crowd control that the U.S. military has developed to "minimize" wartime "collateral damage" and control civil disobedience and peaceful protest at home. "Maintaining and establishing law and order, reducing civil disturbances and responding to varied levels of threats have become mission assignments" (see <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/munitions/non-lethal.htm>).

Ever wonder how it would feel to be microwaved from a distance? The Vehicle-Mounted Active Denial System is your answer. The ray travels at the speed of light, penetrates 1/64 inch into the skin and produces an intense burning sensation that makes people pull away in less than one second. The ray can be deflected by a garbage can lid, or in wet weather it can be absorbed by water droplets.

However, wet weather can be foiled by the High-Power Microwave (HPM)/E-Bomb which can be modified to produce a variety of Electro-Magnetic Pulses (EMP). Whatever it may do to the target, the EMP also disrupts any electronic device around.

I have not covered all the non-lethal weapons pos-

sible, but am ending with Pulsed-Energy Projectile (PEP).

PEP is a vile device that uses laser technology to produce a flash, a bang and a shock wave. It is a plasma pulse that explodes the air where it strikes and vaporizes the first thing it hits. The U.S. Government spent \$3,173,000 to fund research for this non-lethal weapon. In 2006 the plan was ". . . to mount the laser on a truck, plane or helicopter, fire it from a safe distance, and stop rioters, snipers or soldiers without risking harm to military personnel. The good news is that it works." (see <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ground/pep.htm>)

"Non-lethal" weapons may ease the conscience of oligarchs, but their open use of torture in the streets aims to end peaceful protest.

—January

Immigrants protest

Los Angeles—On Oct. 10, 1,000 Latina/o workers and supporters marched and rallied in downtown Los Angeles to protest exploitation, unemployment and the growing racist anti-immigrant policies such as ICE raids. A recent *L.A. Times* article stated that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department will be given powers of Federal Immigration police, which would result in increased racial profiling and human rights violations, especially against Latinas/os—documented and undocumented or U.S. citizens. People migrate to the U.S. from the south to escape unemployment and poverty largely created by privatization and foreign capital as well as trade agreements such as NAFTA and CAFTA.

There were many signs that read "Boycott The Census." A marcher explained that the census would be used to further repress immigrant workers and communities. Other signs said "Obama—fulfill your promise" and "Full rights for all immigrants."

The Council of Overhill Farms Workers brought attention to the struggle of workers at Overhill Farms in Vernon, Cal. They are fighting abusive and racist treatment against Latinas/os, including unfair termination of 300 workers. Overhill Farms have been exploiting them for 30 years by cheating workers out of wages, and firing workers in a campaign of intimidation and fear. They called for all workers in Vernon (a small industrial city in Los Angeles County) and surrounding cities to unite with the Overhill Farms workers.

—Basho

Total challenge to the regime persists in Iran

On Nov. 4 hundreds of thousands of people staged a nationwide protest on the 30th anniversary of the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Iran. This year, however, the tables were turned, as the mass opposition took aim not so much against the U.S. as against the ruling power at home. Chanting "Khamenei is a murderer, his rule is null and void," and "Down with tyranny, whether that of Shah or the Leader," the marchers throughout Iran made it clear that despite unprecedented security measures and all the threats against them, they will continue to press their demands. Ironically, the marchers did voice judgment against the U.S., challenging Obama to take sides: "Obama, Obama, either you're with them or with us." They also chanted, "A Free Green Iran doesn't need Nuclear Bombs."

Because Nov. 3 is also the 31st anniversary of the day that the Shah's security forces attacked and killed student demonstrators at Tehran University, students at both high school and university campuses have been mobilizing for weeks for today's events. Truly the youth, especially the girls and women students who bravely created a human shield between the security forces and the male students, were the vanguard of today's activities. The anti-riot guards and the Basijis were particularly brutal against women as they abducted hundreds and beat them viciously.

Yet despite all security measures to keep students inside campuses, they chanted "no fear, no fear, we are all together," and they were able to break through security forces and join the masses in the streets tearing down billboard-size pictures of Khamenei and shouting "Free all Political Prisoners" and "Students will die but won't accept degradation."

Just as during the Carter administration, when the CIA analysts kept dismissing the coming of the revolution, today analysts concluded that months of repression have gutted the movement of its organizational capacity and leadership. As reported by the Nov. 3 *Los Angeles Times*, one such analyst, Mark Fowler, stated that "Our view is that the regime has largely neutralized the opposition...It seems to us that they have pretty much decapitated the opposition in terms of leadership. I don't think the government is particularly worried about it." Nothing could be further from the truth, as the masses boldly displayed.

A *Times Online* reporter on Nov. 5 quoted some activists saying, "This is a people's movement that the system can't destroy. We have again sent a message to Ahmadinejad and the Leader that society has not forgotten what they've done. They have beaten, raped, tortured and threatened the people, but we still showed up." Perhaps it was in reference to the arrests and torture of thousands of opposition leaders and student activists that Mousavi felt compelled to issue a statement for the occasion, saying, "People should find such wisdom that they can lead themselves at any time and under any circumstances. Our people, today, are leaders."

Yet acknowledging the wisdom of the people does not absolve the leaders of responsibility for the direction of the movement, or for what happened to the 1979 Revolution. It is true that most who seized the U.S. Embassy are either in jail or out of power now. But it is not true that they are listening fully to the voices from below. Instead, they, along with Mousavi himself, have not distanced themselves from equating the taking of low-level U.S. personnel hostage with a "second revolution."

At the time, Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., was deeply involved in the Iranian Revolution and issued a challenge to all the Left not to tail-end that kind of pseudo anti-imperialism. Such action, she argued, may give Khomeini a "red" coloring, but it is a retreat from the original revolutionary perspective. In a Political-Philosophic Letter, "What is Philosophy? What is Revolution?" she warned all revolutionaries against the new grave contradictions within the revolution. "Concrete, in the Hegelian sense of the synthesis of diverse elements into a concrete **totality**, would show that, by no means coincidentally, the occupation of the Embassy paralleled the completion of the **counter-revolutionary** Constitution." (Available in the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, #7219, along with the Farsi edition, #7266.)

Today the masses have clearly expressed judgment against that Constitution, which established the office of the Supreme Leader with veto power, as nothing but the restoration of dictatorship. It is high time for the leaders of the movement not to be self-limiting solely along constitutional lines.

—Raha

WORLD VIEW

By Gerry Emmett

The prominence of Maoist groups in recent events in Nepal and India show that the historic problems of Maoism have not been overcome by its current representatives. In Nepal, the massive popular demonstrations that closed down the capital, Kathmandu, in early November have been followed by talks between United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) leader Prachanda and the Nepali Congress president, Girija Prasad Koirala.

They will try to work out a compromise "third path" to settle the current upheavals which began when Prachanda, who had been elected to the presidency with 38% of the votes, tried to dismiss the head of the armed forces and institute a previous agreement that the Maoist guerrilla fighters would be integrated into a new military.

Prachanda was overruled by opposition from Congress and stepped down from the presidency, citing the need for civilian control of the military.

It is the real struggle of millions for greater freedom and economic justice that seeks expression through current events. Any government in Nepal will have to deal with the reality of being a small and impoverished country caught between the two massive state-capitalist powers, India and China.

India probably has a hand in current events through the Nepalese Congress. It was India that helped bring Prachanda into the electoral arena. Above all, the Maoists know that neither India nor China wishes to see a real social revolution on their borders. That is a dilemma for the Maoists.

The revolutionary peasantry and workers, women, youth, and LGBTQI people of Nepal will be the real measure of social progress. LGBTQI people have recently made some important advances, despite the negative position on gays that the Maoists have held.

In eastern India, the government is using an over-

Honduras betrayal

The coup government in Honduras, working together with Obama's U.S. State Department (further enabled by right-wing U.S. Congressional members), has maneuvered to betray any possibility of a near-term return to democracy in Honduras. In fostering a false agreement with ousted President Zelaya, holed up in the Brazilian Embassy, the U.S. has once again shown its true colors in relation to Latin America: do it our way or we will take you down, coups included. The agreement signed was supposed to return Zelaya to the presidency (though with no real power), in a "unity" government, together with the holding of presidential elections at the end of November, which the U.S. would recognize as valid (something which previously they said they would not do without the return of Zelaya).

The kicker was the need for the Honduran Congress to approve Zelaya's return to power, but with no time limit to do so, even though the clock was running toward the presidential elections. The Congress has refused to do so. However, the U.S. now says it will recognize the new presidential elections regardless. The U.S. is now intent on fully legitimizing the coup.

The real betrayal, of course, is to the massive protest movement that developed inside Honduras since the June ouster of the president. (See October-November issue of *N&L* for an in-person report of that movement.) The coming period will show how the movement intends to respond to this latest outrage.

—E.W.

Nepal, India unrest

blown threat from the naxalites, of the recently formed Communist Party of India (Maoist), to launch an invasion of remote tribal areas. "Operation Greenhunt" targets Maoists in areas that have long been coveted for capitalist development. Many Indian leftists have pointed out that it will put tribal peoples in the middle of a struggle they haven't started.

These Maoists (a minority even among India's Maoists) have been small, isolated groups in the jungles for decades, and much of their fighting has been intramural and factional. Unlike the Nepalese Maoists, they have no relation to mass struggles. They don't pose any threat to the Indian state and are being used as an excuse for military action to claim tribal lands.

As Indian leftist Nirmalangshu Mukherji pointed out, "the poorest of the poor and the historically marginalized will suffer the most in terms of loss of lives, livelihood and habitat."

Puerto Rican strike



A one-day general strike gripped Puerto Rico on Oct. 14. Tens of thousands of workers rallied in San Juan protesting proposed layoffs of public sector workers in an economy that already sees 15.8% unemployment. (About a quarter of workers are in the public sector.) The governor has proposed laying off another 20,000 public workers.

The proposed new round of layoffs could raise unemployment to 17%. Protesters also pointed out that the cuts would fall heavily on the lowest paid workers, such as janitors and school counselors. One of the strike rally organizers, Bishop Juan Vera, declared: "Today we are declaring the state of peaceful insurrection of the Puerto Rican people."

The strike was organized and endorsed by the *Frente Amplio de Solidaridad y Lucha* (Broad Front for Solidarity and Struggle), a broad range of organizations. It had three major demands: 1) repeal of fiscal emergency laws and the restitution of all laid-off workers; 2) establishing taxes on multinational corporations, and eliminating benefits enjoyed by them under the U.S. Federal Internal Revenue Act; 3) halting evictions of working-class and immigrant squatter communities, halting expropriation of poor communities for development projects, ending political and military abuses to all, and recognition of the right to equal housing for all human beings.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. *News & Letters* was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910–1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the

National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907–83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject what is, but

to reveal and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and

her final 1987 Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and donated new supplementary volumes to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

In opposing this capitalistic, racist, sexist, heterosexist, class-ridden society, we have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead." We participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our *Constitution* states: "It is our aim...to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking. Send for a copy of the *Constitution* of News and Letters Committees.

Strikes in Mexico

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national university UNAM when electrical worker union members of *Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas* (SME) came to speak to students and appeal for their solidarity. An assembly of students and faculty voted to support the electrical workers, close the university the next day, and leaflet and demonstrate in the city. The entire university was shut down for the demonstration.

Outside Mexico City, the highway between Mexico and Querétaro was blocked, as was the main road to Cuernavaca. Federal police responded with tear gas and arrests. There were more protests in the State of Mexico and Morelos, in Oaxaca and Chiapas, and in the states of Jalisco, Guerrero, Michoacán and Chihuahua.

The struggle had begun on Oct. 12 when federal police occupied the facilities of *Luz y Fuerza*, barring the workers. President Calderón summarily fired some 44,000 workers and declared *Luz y Fuerza* dissolved.

Within three days a massive demonstration of 300,000 or more marched to the Zócalo, in perhaps the largest outpouring of protest in recent years, with trade unionists and their families and tens of thousands of students and social activists.

SME has a history of militancy and fighting for workers' rights. The Calderón administration has long sought to break the union. To further divide the union, they have offered huge bonuses to those who accept termination. Though more than half the workers have been forced to accept the settlement, they have not abandoned their union or the protests.

After the successful one-day strike, the government remains intransigent, refusing serious negotiations. There have been legal maneuvers to stop Calderón's unprecedented actions. But the focus has now turned to the possibility of a national general strike.

Not only would a general strike face the deeply militarized government of Calderón, who does not hesitate to use his troops and federal police, but the principal means of communication are in the hands of the Right. Major attempts at national social solidarity, such as the protests in Oaxaca in 2006 and *La otra campaña* (the Other Campaign) of the Zapatistas, have not been able to create conditions for a fully national movement.

Yet there can be no other authentic route to social transformation than the construction from below (*desde abajo*) of a national dialogue, a national movement addressing the vast problems of social inequality, racism and sexism that characterize the country and calls for the construction of a new Mexico.

—Eugene Walker

Middle East cauldron

Efforts of the Obama administration to move the Israeli-Palestinian morass off of dead center have so far been for naught. While the U.S. signaled its intent to pressure the government to stop Israeli settlement construction on the West Bank, the "new" administration of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, quickly signaled that he had no intention of doing so.

At the same time, on the Palestinian side the confrontation between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority and Hamas' control of the Gaza continues, leaving a completely fragmented Palestinian movement. Gaza continues in extreme misery with Israel allowing the barest minimum of goods to arrive. Between Israeli intransigence and the Palestinian internal conflict, Abbas has now indicated he will not run again to be head of the Palestinian Authority, thereby threatening the continuing existence of the Palestinian Authority. Any serious negotiations for a two-state solution seems far off.

—E.W.